

The integration of citizenship values in french language education: an analysis of the 4th-year middle school textbook in the algerian educational system.

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Receipt date : 20/11/2024 ; Acceptance Date: 11/03/2025

Abstract: This research investigates how the concept of citizenship is represented in Algeria's 4ème AM French textbook. The study evaluates how educational values and skills linked to citizenship are conveyed through reading materials, illustrations, and language activities, using a descriptive content analysis methodology. It examines critical themes such as patriotism, equality, human rights, social justice, and environmental responsibility, aiming to determine how effectively the textbook aligns with the goals of citizenship education.

The analysis reveals that the 4ème AM French textbook effectively integrates the concept of citizenship through diverse pedagogical components. Reading materials address topics such as national pride, racial equality, and eco-citizenship, encouraging students to reflect on their responsibilities as members of society. Illustrations reinforce these values by visualizing historical events, promoting solidarity, and raising awareness about sustainability. Language activities provide students with opportunities to engage with citizenship concepts in meaningful ways, emphasizing the importance of human rights, respect for national symbols, and environmental stewardship.

The findings demonstrate that the textbook contributes significantly to fostering civic awareness and responsibility among students. By integrating citizenship themes into its content, the textbook supports the development of well-informed, active, and responsible citizens, aligning with the Algerian curriculum's emphasis on preparing learners for participation in a harmonious and democratic society.

Keywords: Citizenship; Education; Curriculum; Values; textbook.

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1 - Introduction

When examining the objectives of Algeria's educational policy and its progressive reform process, aimed at addressing the demands of globalization within the educational system and aligning with a democratic political and pedagogical orientation, it becomes evident that this policy is designed to meet the needs of the entire population. Emphasis is placed on promoting citizenship through educational programs and fostering openness to other civilizations and cultures, making this theme critical for preserving the specificity and originality of Algerian society, its religion, language, history, identity, customs, and traditions.

The Algerian state has reformed its educational system by defining its objectives, developing programs and curricula, and establishing structures to achieve these goals. Schools, in turn, are responsible for preparing successive generations to assume their roles as citizens. A significant driver of this effort to construct a public education system and higher education framework is the urgent need to cultivate enlightened, aware, and responsible citizenship coupled with a commitment to quality education.

Education for citizenship is generally regarded as a tool for regulating social relations. Consequently, its curricular content focuses on understanding human rights, national history, government structures, and political processes. Its methods and tools promote active learning, engaging students in practicing citizenship and debating it within schools and the community. It aims to equip students with knowledge, understanding, skills, values, and dispositions, enabling them to participate actively, responsibly, and critically in democratic social life (France Jutras, 2010).

1.1- Study Problematic:

Citizenship education is more comprehensive than just learning basic facts about state institutions and the dynamics of political life. It also involves acquiring the skills, tendencies, attitudes, virtues, and loyalties essential for fulfilling the roles of a citizen, which should be present and influential throughout the entire educational system (Audigier, 2007).

In other words, education in the values of citizenship is shaped by various factors, including what children learn, how they learn it, the classroom learning environment, the school climate, and other elements beyond the traditional curriculum content. Thus, fostering civic values in students is not an independent component of the curriculum but rather an integrated goal within the curriculum framework (Duhamel, André & Jutras, France, 2005).

In our study on how the concept of citizenship is addressed in the new Algerian educational system and integrated into the French curriculum for the fourth year of middle school (referred to as 4ème AM), we observed that French, alongside other subjects, contributes to the effort of teaching this concept and reviving its importance in students' minds.

This leads us to the following question:

Does the 4ème AM French textbook in Algeria include indicators of citizenship and its values, as reflected in the teaching materials, illustrations, and language activities?

Answering this question ultimately addresses a broader inquiry:

How does the Algerian educational system address the concept of citizenship in the 4ème AM French textbook?

2- Method and Tools:

2.1. Research Approach:

We employ a descriptive content analysis method in our study on citizenship within the Algerian educational system. This approach involves examining the 4ème AM French textbook to collect, organize, and analyze information. We interpret and compare data, including words, phrases, images, symbols, concepts, and educational activities, through tabular representations to evaluate the content. Quantitative measures are utilized to determine the proportions of representation of the concept of citizenship and related values or associated concepts.

2.2. Study Population:

The study population consists of the 4ème AM French textbook. Cynthia Eid argues that the most effective way to explore the connections between in-school and out-of-school contexts within the Algerian framework is through the school textbook, as it dictates the teacher's approach (Eid et al., 2018).

The choice of the 4ème AM French textbook has several key reasons to justify the study population:

- First, as a central pedagogical tool, it serves as the primary medium of interaction between students and educational content, acting as a direct link between the learner and the school. The textbook plays a fundamental role in knowledge transmission, specifically designed to guide learning in alignment with the school curriculum.
- Second, due to its broad reach and accessibility, this textbook is a common reference point for all 4ème AM students, regardless of their social or geographical context. This ensures that analyzing its content and impact can provide representative and relevant results for the entire student population at this level.
- Finally, the 4ème AM French textbook incorporates important pedagogical and didactic choices influencing students' linguistic and cultural competencies. Studying this textbook allows for a direct evaluation of the teaching and learning strategies employed in French education, making the study crucial for understanding how the textbook addresses educational objectives and meets the students' needs.

2.3. Research Sample:

The research sample consists of the 4ème AM French textbook. This sample represents the Algerian school community, facilitating direct interaction between students and teachers and promoting uniform student participation in educational activities and knowledge acquisition.

2.4. Content Analysis Methodology for the Current Research:

The content of the 4ème AM French textbook in Algeria is analyzed using the content analysis method, defined as a scientific technique aimed at objectively describing, in a structured and quantitative manner, the apparent content of a communication medium (Bardin, 2013). Given the diversity of approaches within this method, we have adapted and organized specific steps to meet the requirements of this research, combining certain stages and elaborating on others to establish the finalized steps used in this study's content analysis.

2.4.1. Defining Research Questions and Hypotheses:

In this initial phase, the researcher must formulate the research questions and hypotheses while considering the specificity of content analysis. It must be clearly

indicated that the hypotheses will be examined through this method and not through alternative approaches.

2.4.2. Determining the Objective of the Analysis:

The analysis aims to examine how the *4ème AM* French textbook addresses the concept of citizenship across three program elements—reading materials, illustrations, and exercises—based on three fundamental themes: patriotism, human rights, and environmental protection. These themes are further broken down into sub-themes as components of citizenship (National Curriculum Commission, French GSD - Algeria, 2016).

The goal is to understand how texts, illustrations, and exercises are presented in this textbook by employing a frequency system to generate data relevant to the specific research questions.

2.4.3. Quantitative Analysis:

Quantitative analysis, a defining feature of content analysis, involves the numerical evaluation of data, transforming observations into mathematical values or quantitative estimations (e.g., "few" or "many") for each observed phenomenon. This approach enables the researcher to validate and stabilize the analysis, ensuring the reproducibility of results through numerical estimates and relative weights. Laurence Bardin (2013) emphasizes that a scientific perspective requires transforming qualitative observations into quantitative data. This step involves organizing content into tables to facilitate statistical data processing.

The steps included in the current research are as follows:

- Developing specific analysis grids tailored to each hypothesis,
- Categorizing and classifying the data,
- Statistical processing of the data.

2.4.4. Qualitative Analysis:

Qualitative analysis involves describing the specific characteristics of the studied elements by interpreting the quantitative data. This method establishes an intellectual connection between the researcher's perception and the obtained results, incorporating the underlying meanings of the content. Depending on the research needs, content analysis may rely on a quantitative approach, a qualitative approach, or a combination of both.

2.5. Analytical Networks as Research Tools:

In this study, content analysis networks are employed as tools to support the research process. As previously mentioned, given the diversity of content elements to be analyzed, a network or set of networks will be designed for each hypothesis individually.

2.5.1. Analysis Grid for the First Hypothesis:

This grid focuses on reading materials in Algeria's *4ème AM* French textbook, detailing their number per project and distribution. To highlight the importance of textbooks for reading, Monique Lebrun notes that the textbook serves as an introductory medium for reading and, in some ways, the "first book." In certain regions or contexts, it may even be the only accessible book for a significant portion of the population (Lebrun, 2007).

2.5.2. Analysis Grid for the Second Hypothesis:

This grid examines the illustrations (photos, images, diagrams, maps, etc.) used in the textbook, their quantity, and their distribution. Illustrations are significant in textbooks, sometimes occupying the most considerable portion of printed elements—the pedagogical function of illustrations within the textbook (Gerard et al., 2009).

2.5.3. Methods of Analysis for the Third Hypothesis:

Exercises and educational activities conducted in class or outside are analyzed to address the third sub-question. This allows us to evaluate the extent to which they embody the concept of citizenship within the textbooks. Learning exercises or activities are systematic, formal, and targeted efforts designed to address specific difficulties and achieve particular objectives (Cuq, 2010).

2.5.4. Statistical Processing Methods:

Statistical tools generate quantitative indicators, facilitating data analysis and result evaluation. Given the methodology, research problem, and hypotheses, the statistical techniques primarily focus on percentages. Frequencies are converted into percentages by multiplying the number by the frequency and dividing the result by the total sample size.

3- Results and Discussion

To address the overarching question of this study, it is necessary to answer the sub-questions posed, beginning with:

3.1. Response to the First Sub-Question:

Does the 4ème AM French textbook in Algeria include reading materials that embody the concept of citizenship?

This question is linked to the following hypothesis:

The 4ème AM French textbook in Algeria includes reading materials that embody the concept of citizenship.

To test this hypothesis, we analyze the reading materials in the 4ème AM French textbook by presenting their projected distribution and providing commentary on selected examples. Table 1 (refer to appendices) outlines the textbook's number and distribution of texts.

Citizenship Through Reading Materials:

Text 1: Project 1, Sequence 1 (pages 8–25)

The first text, titled "L'Algérie, mon beau pays" by Slimane Azem (page 24), is a song introduced as a leisure reading material. It expresses love for Algeria and reflects explicit values of citizenship education, highlighting attachment to the homeland and patriotism. For example, the passage:

"L'Algérie, mon beau pays, je t'aimerai jusqu'à la mort, loin de toi, je vieillis..."

Underscores a profound love for the homeland and encourages students to develop loyalty to their country, fostering patriotic and civic behavior.

Text 2: Project 2, Sequence 1 (pages 67–82)

Titled "Le racisme" (page 70), this text is an excerpt from *Black Boy* by Richard Wright, used for a reading comprehension session. It features a dialogue between a Black child and an elderly White man, addressing racism and discrimination against Black individuals. The excerpt:

"Tu sais ce que les Blancs font aux Noirs ? Ils nous tuent, ils nous empêchent de voter et d'obtenir de bonnes places"

The text highlights racial injustices and prompts students to reflect on the values of equality and respect for rights. It advocates equality and tolerance and condemns all forms of racism, thereby contributing to citizenship education by promoting acceptance of others.

Text 3: Project 2, Sequence 2 (pages 83–103)

This text, titled "La violence à l'égard des femmes et des filles," is drawn from a UNESCO publication (page 86). It addresses the issue of violence against women and girls, with statements such as:

"Elle constitue une des violations des droits humains les plus persistantes et une menace pour des millions de filles et de femmes" and "Une femme sur trois dans le monde a été battue ou maltraitée dans sa vie."

The text raises awareness of the importance of protecting women's rights and combating violence. By promoting values of human rights protection and tolerance, it contributes to citizenship education through awareness of social justice and gender equality.

Text 4: Project 3, Sequence 2 (pages 123–140)

Titled "Nettoyage des plages et berges," this text is an excerpt from a blog (page 130) used in a grammar lesson. It emphasizes civic behaviors such as collaboration and solidarity through ecological actions. For instance, the passage:

"Des employés de l'aquarium de Vancouver se sont regroupés pour nettoyer les berges" And "Plus d'un million de kilogrammes de déchets ont été amassés avant qu'ils nuisent aux poissons, oiseaux de mer"

This text illustrates the importance of environmental preservation in protecting wildlife. It encourages students to adopt eco-citizen behaviors, raising awareness of environmental responsibility and fostering ecological duty.

These texts contribute to citizenship education by exposing students to fundamental values such as patriotism, equality, tolerance, social justice, and environmental protection. They help learners develop a sense of civic responsibility by sensitizing them to essential behaviors and attitudes for building a harmonious and inclusive society.

3.2. Response to the Second Sub-Question:

Does the content of civic education textbooks in Algeria embody the concept of citizenship?

This question relates to the second hypothesis, which asserts that the content of civic education textbooks in Algeria embodies the concept of citizenship.

To verify this hypothesis, we analyze the 4^{ème} AM French textbook illustrations, detailing their distribution by project and providing commentary on selected examples. Table 2 (refer to appendices) outlines the textbook's number and distribution of illustrations.

Citizenship Through Illustrations

Illustration 1:

The image on page 29 depicts a painting titled "*La Bataille de Sidi Brahimi*" by Hocine Ziani. It illustrates the conflict that took place from September 23 to 26, 1845, between Algerian forces led by Emir' Abd El Kader and French troops. Citizenship is reflected in this illustration through themes such as courage, sacrifice, and love for the homeland. This representation aims to instill a sense of national pride and dignity in students.

Illustration 2:

The second image, on page 69, features a postage stamp issued for the International Day of *"Living Together in Peace,"* celebrated annually on May 16. This stamp depicts individuals of various skin tones holding hands, symbolizing solidarity and tolerance among people. The presence of a dove, a universal symbol of peace, reinforces this idea. This illustration promotes respect for diversity and encourages students to avoid discriminatory behaviors, aiming to foster responsible citizenship.

Illustration 3:

The third illustration, located on page 126, is a poster titled *"Who Wastes Food?"* It displays the percentages of food waste, indicating that 47% originates from households. This visual highlights citizens' irresponsibility regarding natural resources and seeks to motivate students to take action to reduce waste by adopting more resource-conscious behaviors.

Illustration 4:

The fourth image, on page 140, shows a hand pouring water to nourish a plant, emphasizing the importance of planting trees and caring for them. This illustration conveys a robust ethical value: protecting the environment as a collective responsibility. It reminds students that everyone must contribute to nature preservation.

These illustrations collectively contribute to citizenship education by embedding values such as patriotism, solidarity, tolerance, and environmental responsibility. They aim to inspire civic behaviors in students, raising awareness of the importance of collective engagement for the common good.

3.3. Response to the Third Sub-Question:

Do the language activities and exercises in Algeria's 4ème AM French textbook embody the concept of citizenship?

To verify this hypothesis, we analyze the activities and language exercises included in the 4ème AM French textbook, detailing their distribution by project and commenting on selected examples. The pedagogical activities in the textbook are examined for their structure and influence on how the concept of citizenship is represented. Table 3 (refer to appendices) outlines the language exercises, specifying their number per project and their distribution in the textbook.

Citizenship in Language Exercises

Exercise 04, Page 33

The sentence: *"La lutte armée fut décidée car les droits des Algériens étaient bafoués"* reminds students of the Algerian people's right to freedom. It emphasizes that faithful citizenship includes the right to live in peace and highlights the defense of rights as a central element of citizenship.

Exercise 01, Page 35

The sentence: *"Mes parents exigent que nous chantions tous les couplets de l'hymne national"* explicitly evokes citizenship by singing the national anthem, symbolizing Algeria's sovereignty. This exercise aims to instill a sense of patriotic pride in students, linking respect for national symbols to a citizen's identity.

Exercise 01, Page 93

The sentence: *"Une jeune maman déclare : 'je veux que mes enfants vivent sans peur'"* highlights children's right to live free from violence and discrimination. It underscores that protecting society's youngest members is essential for their development into secure, fulfilled citizens free from threats.

Exercise 02, Page 131

The sentence: “*Les cigarettes sont en vente libre quoiqu’elles soient dangereuses pour la santé*” critiques the availability and consumption of tobacco due to its harmful effects on health and the environment. This exercise aims to raise awareness among students about the consequences of smoking, encouraging them to reject harmful behaviors, particularly during childhood and adolescence.

These exercises contribute to citizenship education by incorporating respect for rights, patriotic pride, safety, and responsibility toward public health. They encourage students to develop civic behaviors by raising awareness of the importance of peace, respect for national symbols, and personal and collective responsibility.

Key Findings of the Study

1. Integration of the Concept of Citizenship in Reading Materials

The analysis of the 4^{ème} AM French textbook reveals that the reading materials effectively embody the concept of citizenship through diverse themes and values:

- **Patriotism and National Identity:** The text “*L’Algérie, mon beau pays*” highlights love for the homeland and loyalty, fostering students' profound sense of patriotism.
- **Equality and Tolerance:** “*Le racisme*,” an excerpt from *Black Boy*, raises awareness about racial discrimination and promotes the values of equality and respect for diversity.
- **Social Justice and Gender Equality:** UNESCO’s publication on violence against women educates students about human rights and emphasizes the need to combat gender-based violence.
- **Environmental Responsibility:** The text “*Nettoyage des plages et berges*” emphasizes eco-citizenship, encouraging students to adopt responsible behaviors for environmental protection.

These materials expose students to fundamental values such as patriotism, equality, Tolerance, social justice, and ecological responsibility, helping them develop a sense of social harmony and inclusion.

2. Representation of Citizenship in Illustrations

The illustrations in the textbook also play a significant role in teaching civic values:

- **National Pride and History:** The illustration of “*La Bataille de Sidi Brahimi*” reflects Algeria’s historical struggle, emphasizing courage, sacrifice, and love for the homeland.
- **Peace and Solidarity:** The postage stamp celebrating “*Living Together in Peace*” highlights Tolerance, diversity, and solidarity among peoples.
- **Environmental Awareness:** The infographic on food waste and the image of a hand-watering plant raise awareness about resource preservation and collective environmental responsibility.

These visuals complement the texts by providing symbolic and concrete representations of civic values.

3. Integration of the Concept of Citizenship in Language Activities

The language exercises in the 4^{ème} AM French textbook reinforce citizenship concepts by incorporating them into practical and relatable scenarios:

- **Defense of Rights:** Exercises such as “*La lutte armée fut décidée car les droits des Algériens étaient bafoués*” raise awareness about the importance of freedom and the defense of rights.
- **National Symbols:** Activities related to the national anthem connect students to Algeria’s sovereignty and national identity.

- **Human Rights:** Sentences like “*Je veux que mes enfants vivent sans peur*” emphasize the right to a life free from violence and discrimination.
 - **Public Health and Social Responsibility:** Exercises addressing the harms of smoking, such as “*Les cigarettes sont en vente libre quoiqu’elles soient dangereuses pour la santé,*” encourage responsible behaviors toward health and the environment.
- These activities enable students to internalize citizenship values through concrete applications, fostering responsible behaviors on both individual and collective levels.

Overall Findings

The study demonstrates that the 4^{ème} AM French textbook effectively integrates the concept of citizenship through its reading materials, illustrations, and language exercises. The themes highlighted essential values such as patriotism, equality, human rights, environmental protection, and social responsibility.

Incorporating these values into various components of the textbook significantly contributes to the formation of enlightened, active, and responsible citizens. This approach aligns with the educational objectives of the Algerian curriculum, emphasizing citizenship education as a holistic and interdisciplinary process that prepares students to participate in a harmonious and democratic society actively.

4- Conclusion

The analysis of the 4^{ème} AM French textbook in Algeria reveals that it thoroughly and comprehensively addresses the concept of citizenship. This concept is articulated through a well-structured integration of educational skills and values, offering diverse content that spans local, national, regional, and global dimensions. The textbook employs various media, including images, texts, and documents, to present citizenship in a multifaceted and engaging manner.

A vital strength of the textbook is its incorporation of active learning strategies, problem-solving exercises, and curricular and extracurricular activities. These components create opportunities for students to connect theoretical knowledge with practical application, bridging the gap between the classroom and their broader social and institutional contexts. The textbook promotes critical thinking, collaboration, and responsibility through this approach, empowering students to understand and internalize civic values such as patriotism, equality, human rights, environmental responsibility, and social justice.

The textbook effectively fosters students' sense of identity, belonging, and engagement with their community by addressing these themes through reading materials, illustrations, and language activities. The analysis demonstrates that the 4^{ème} AM French textbook not only aligns with the objectives of the Algerian curriculum but also prepares students to become active, responsible, and well-rounded citizens capable of contributing to a democratic and harmonious society. This highlights the textbook's role as a cornerstone for citizenship education, reinforcing its relevance as an essential educational tool.

Appendix of Tables:

**Table (1): Distribution of Reading Materials
by Project in the 4ème AM French Textbook.**

Themes	Sub-themes	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3
Patriotism	- Love for the homeland - Historical figures	12	9	14
Human Rights	- Racism - Non-violence - Solidarity	9	5	11
Environmental Protection	- Renewable energy - Eco-citizenship	3	7	14

**Table (2): Distribution of Illustrations
by Project in the 4ème AM French Textbook.**

Themes	Sub-themes	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3
Patriotism	- Love for the homeland - Historical figures	8	6	9
Human Rights	- Racism - Non-violence - Solidarity	9	5	7
Environmental Protection	- Renewable energy - Eco-citizenship	4	7	8

**Table (3): Distribution of Exercises
by Project in the 4ème AM French Textbook.**

Thèmes	Sous-thèmes	Projet 1	Projet 2	Projet 3
Patriotism	- Love for the homeland - Historical figures	31	18	21
Human Rights	- Racism - Non-violence - Solidarity	28	9	18
Environmental Protection	- Renewable energy - Eco-citizenship	12	11	13

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