

Landscape education in the third degree language textbooks of basic education in Tunisia

Fersi Feten^{1*}, Ben Attia Ons¹ Abdelmajid Naceur²

¹: U.R. Conservation and Valorization of Plant Resources through the Creation of a Botanical Garden (UR13AGR07) of the Higher Agronomic Institute of Chott-Mariem, University of Sousse, Tunisia.

²: U.R. cognition and learning, EDIPS-ISEFC-Virtual University of Tunis laboratory

ABSTRACT: The period of childhood is, then, very important in the life of each one of us. In fact, the child receives the essential notions during his studies and enriches them according to elements of his environment, his personal experiences, etc. This explains our interest in primary education and its contribution to landscape education because today's children are only the decision-makers of tomorrow. This text is based on the notion of curriculum analysis in order to dissect the content of the manuals of language and their contribution in raising learners' awareness of the notion of landscape.

KEYWORDS: Curricular Analysis, Primary Curriculum, Landscape Education, manuals of language

I. INTRODUCTION

This work focuses on the integration of the notion of "landscape" in basic education in Tunisia, because we are aware that education must follow social, economic and cultural changes. In order for education to always be closely related to social demand, any change or new practice must be taken into account in the preparation of curricula. Thus, our research takes more importance, because the landscape is, today, a subject of topicality in Tunisia and captures the attention of the professionals and makes subject of a certain number of political decisions. Our children-learners must be introduced to this new concept in order to foster a conscious future generation of environmental issues, the richness of their country's landscape and the obligation to preserve the "green". It is at this level that the role of official documents and the methods put in place, in other words the curriculum, is integrated in order to integrate this rather complex concept into young minds. So we are faced with the problematic of our research work: Does basic education in Tunisia promote education on the landscape? and How is the landscape designated in the textbooks of the 3rd degree languages of basic education?

The basic education in Tunisia is spread over 9 years including 6 years in primary and 3 in preparatory cycle. The primary cycle has three levels of education, each of which consists of two levels. It should be noted that this research is concerned with the 3rd degree which is of two levels of study, namely, the 5th and 6th grade. It is important to mention that each level has its own official curriculum and therefore its own manuals. Basic education, a window for the student on the outside world, aims to offer answers to all his questions and to explain the course of various phenomena (environmental, scientific, social, cultural, etc.). To do this, the teaching revolves around a certain number of themes chosen according to the educational values they convey and the news events they deal with. Learning themes refer to the concepts or subjects to which the different teaching modules converge. The main themes are eight in number; Health and well-being, Media and new technologies, Solidarity and citizenship, Peace and tolerance, Work and leisure, Culture and discovery of the world, Initiation and project and Environment through the teaching of this theme, the student learns to discover the environment in which he evolves and he is made aware of the role he can play in the process of its protection, conservation and improvement. The choice of 3rd degree as a framework for our study is supported by the idea that learners at this level and as and when class crossings have acquired different skills allowing them to quite complex concepts such as the concept of landscape. This article deals with the landscape designations in the textbooks of the language modules of primary education in Tunisia. The choice of textbooks to be analyzed is made according to a study of the educational programs of the different modules to extract those approaching, directly or indirectly, the notion of landscape.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

In order to reach the objectives and to answer the questions posed by our study, we created grids of analysis of contents based on the principle of the curricular analysis. The aim is to dissect the lessons of the Arabic and

French language modules, to draw up a list of the landscape designations used in these textbooks and to check the contribution of these modules to a landscape education. Note that textbooks are the same for all students in primary education and are all published by the National Pedagogical Center. They are written by committees composed of senior teachers, principal inspectors, supervisors and educational guides appointed by the Ministry of Education to accomplish this task. The main purpose of this curriculum analysis is to discover how landscape is approached in this type of curriculum.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3-1- Landscape Education in Arabic Language Textbooks : The reading manual for grade 5 students consists of 8 modules, each consisting of 8 lessons. At first sight, the analysis of the reading manual has shown that texts directly integrating the concept of landscape are, in most cases, descriptive and narrative. They approach the landscape both implicitly and explicitly, as shown in the graph below.

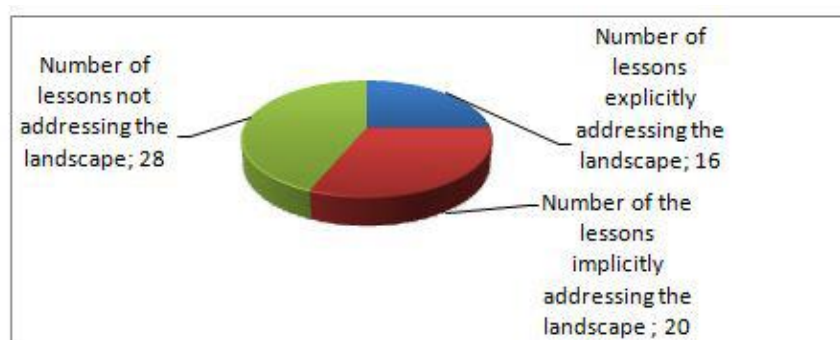


Fig 1: Distribution of Arabic lessons for Grade 5 students dealing with the notion of landscape

We note that of a total of 64 lessons, 20 of them define the landscape as a hidden curriculum, in the sense that its learning is done indirectly through the teaching of other notions. It is also emphasized that the different landscape archetypes are introduced into the Arabic module as a spatial framework of different learning situations. As a result, we recognize the rural environment, the urban environment and the natural environment as background in different images accompanying, explaining and introducing the texts. There are 16 lessons that address the landscape in a direct way. They set landscape education as the main skill to be acquired at the end of the module. It is noted that in addition to the three landscape archetypes, studied throughout the various degrees of basic education, the Arabic module introduces new types of spaces such as the Saharan landscape and the landscape of the oasis. The natural landscape (wild or shaped by Man) sees its designations multiply. The rural landscape is, in turn, referred to in the Arabic module as a main skill to be achieved. Different texts deal with this type of landscape by displaying its components and the different relations between its entities. An important point to be learned is that the teaching of the rural landscape is no longer limited to the vegetal component and the agricultural practices to define this type of space. Indeed, education integrates the mineral element as a typical rural entity. This is how the architectural component is presented as an identity element and characteristic of each type of space. The rural environment is defined by a specific type of architecture that shows an individual dwelling style, a traditional style and a low density of urbanization. On the other hand, the urban landscape is characterized by modern architecture, individual and collective dwellings with a high density of urbanization and the multiplicity of services. Another type of urban space is still mentioned in the Arabic module. This is the old town or the medina with its typical architectural style, its narrow streets, its spatial organization and its different trades. The learner discovers that the urban environment can be modern (the cities) or old (the medina) and that each type has its characteristic entities. Thus, we can say that the landscape is addressed during the Arabic module for students in the 5th year of primary school. The natural landscape is designated by nature, the Sahara, the garden and the forest. The rural landscape presents itself as the countryside and the oasis and the urban landscape evokes the city and the medina. But, are there other designations given to these types of landscape in the content of the Arabic module? The answer to this question is provided by the results of the analysis grid shown in the graph below.

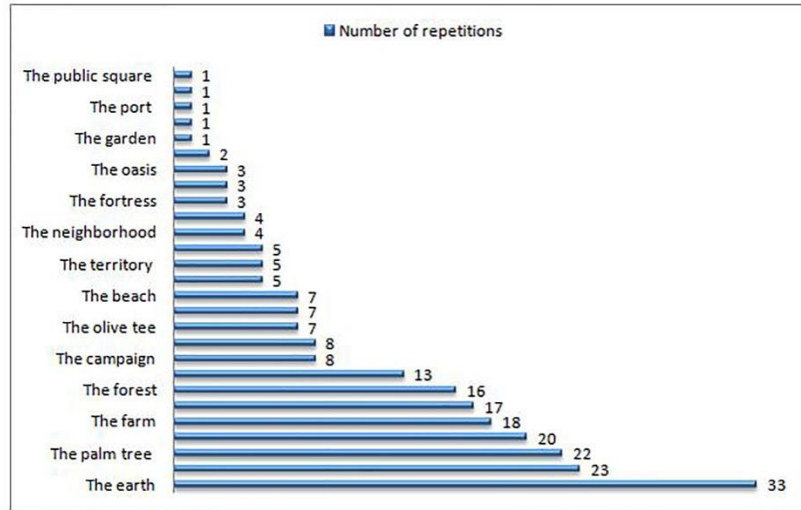


Fig2: The landscape designations in the Arabic module for grade 5 students according to the number of repetitions

The rural landscape is determined by the notions of village, farm, countryside, orchard and plains. The urban environment is defined by both the green element and the architectural component. It is in this sense that one finds the city, the old city, the district, the streets, the capital, the gardens and the public squares mentioned in the texts to refer to the urban landscape. As for the natural landscape, it is designated by the sea, the forest and the desert. We must focus on a very important designation of the landscape which is the "territory". It gives a new aspect to this notion and gives it a more elaborate dimension. The landscape is no longer attached to the specific entities of each type of space but encompasses all the living environments. With this new designation, landscape education reaches a more advanced level of apprehension and introduces learners to wide-ranging perception and understanding of the logic of territorial organization. Other elements are also integrated from the 5th year such as the notion of remains and fortresses. They are part of the study of the ancient city and give an identity aspect of this type of space. The integration of the concept of heritage, which in turn defines a new type of landscape, namely the heritage landscape or the identity landscape that tells the story of the place, is emphasized. The coastal landscape is also evoked in this module through the notion of the beach and a type of development specific to the nature of the space namely the ports. It is important to mention that the plant component continues to be a determining factor in the type of landscape. It is in this sense that one finds the palm tree and the olive tree among the designations of the landscape. Their presence evokes a particular type of landscape which gives them the position of identity elements of places. Thus, the Arabic module for students in the 5th year of primary education promotes landscape education and incorporates into its content very elaborate designations of the landscape such as the territory, the remains, the ancient city, etc. The learner is able to apprehend any type of landscape because he is armed with adequate knowledge and vocabulary. But are these designations also suitable for landscape education in the Arabic textbook for Grade 6 students? And what are the landscape designations in this module? The graph below shows that the landscape is well approached in the Arabic module for Grade 6 students both in a direct and indirect way.

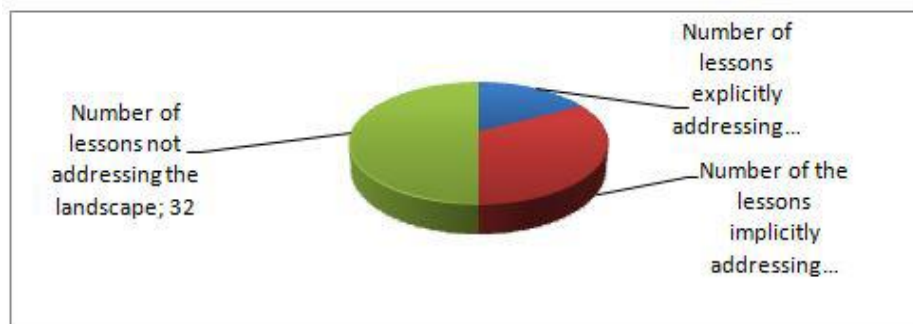


Fig3: Distribution of Arabic lessons for 6th year students on the notion of landscape

The results of the analysis grid show that the manual is composed of 6 modules each containing a different number of lessons whose total number is 64. We note that 50% of the lessons have a direct or indirect link with the notion of landscape. It is in this sense that we retain the presence of 21 lessons implicitly addressing the landscape and integrating it as a spatial framework for other learning. The different types of landscape are evoked in the texts and illustrated by images in a tacit way and indirectly introducing students to this concept. It can be noted that the desert landscape mentioned in the 5th grade textbook is one of the types of spaces that students master. In turn, it presents itself as a spatial framework for an act of learning and as a primary skill to

be attained, and is, therefore, the subject of the lesson. The three types of landscape (rural, natural and urban) are also subject to direct learning aimed at educating learners about these types of spaces and their specific components. The learning of the natural landscape involves concepts related to environmental education and the protection of nature. Lessons on the rural landscape show some farming practices and farming activities defining this area. As for the urban landscape, it is presented as the living environment of city dwellers and in turn incorporates the notions of gardens, green and improving the quality of life in urban areas. Thus, nature, the desert, the oasis, the environment, the countryside and the city are shown as the designations given to the landscape in the French language textbook for students in the 6th grade. However, the results of the analysis grid have detected the presence of other notions referring to landscape in the content of this module.

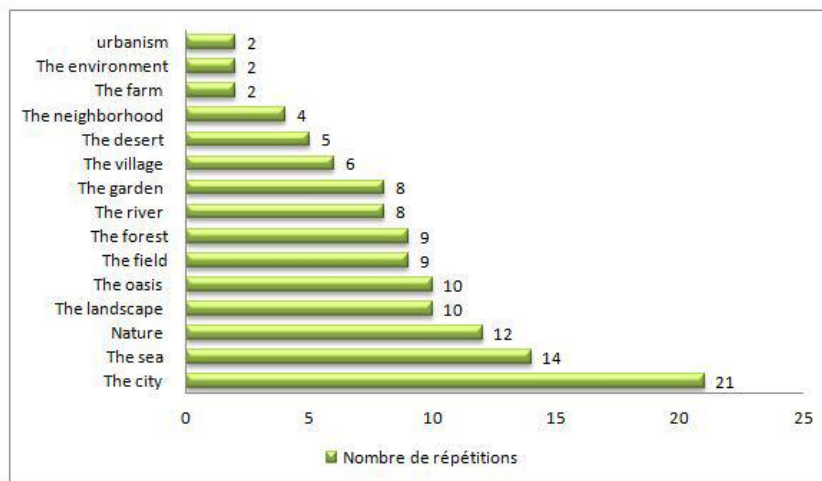


Fig4: The landscape designations in the Arabic module for Grade 6 students according to the number of repetitions

The designations of the sea, the field, the river, the forest, the garden, the village, the neighborhood and the farm are the same designations given to the natural, urban and rural landscape in the 5th year manual. On the other hand, we note the presence of the notion of urbanization mentioned in the manual to refer to the urban environment and which is a very elaborate and specific concept to understand a landscape and understand its spatial organization. The notion of the environment is repositioned as a landscape designation in the Arabic textbook. It integrates the protection of nature, respect for the environmental balance and the importance of green in improving the quality of life. In conclusion, the designations and meanings of the landscape encountered in the Arabic textbook of the 5th grade are more elaborate and promote an understanding and a developed apprehension of the landscape compared to those found in the 6th grade textbook.

3-2-Textbooks of the French language a basis for landscape education :The results of the content analysis grid of this module, show that the landscape is addressed in some number of lessons.

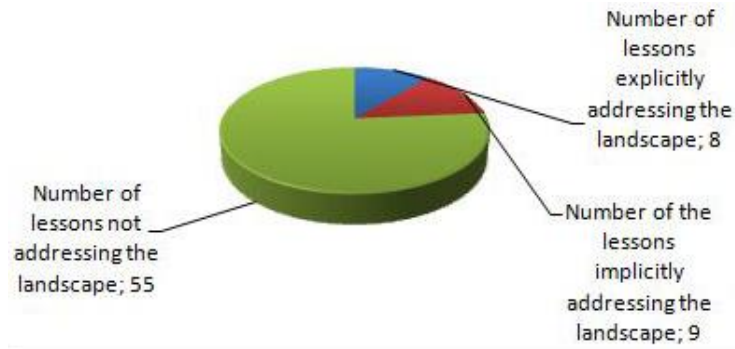


fig5: Distribution of French lessons for 5th year students on the notion of landscape

We note that out of a total of 72 lessons, 9 of them implicitly address the landscape. They present it as a secondary learning or hidden curriculum. Landscape education is done indirectly, involuntarily through the teaching of other notions. Environmental education represents a privileged framework for implicitly introducing landscape. The study of the value of the tree, the importance of nature conservation and the behavior to adopt with regard to green spaces form concepts that integrate the concept of landscape. Natural, urban and rural landscapes are also addressed in the French language manual as a framework for learning different notions. The pupil is indirectly introduced to these types of spaces and therefore has the appropriate vocabulary to designate each one of them. The results of the analysis grid highlighted the presence of 8 lessons explicitly addressing the landscape. It represents, thus, the main subject of education and landscape education is regarded as the essential skill to acquire. In this perspective too, we find the three types of landscapes evoked in the texts and illustrated by the images. We have already mentioned the presence of 8 chapters constituting the French module, one of which holds, especially, our attention. The chapter "Discovering Other Countries" raises awareness of the landscape by showing them elements and monuments specific to different countries. They are identity entities of certain cities, which tell the history of the places and which define a landscape, a memory, a particular heritage. These elements may be ancient or modern, but their evocation refers us to a specific framework. Thus, the results of the analysis grid have shown that the landscape is well approached in the French module both directly and indirectly and that certain designations exist to refer to the different types of landscape.

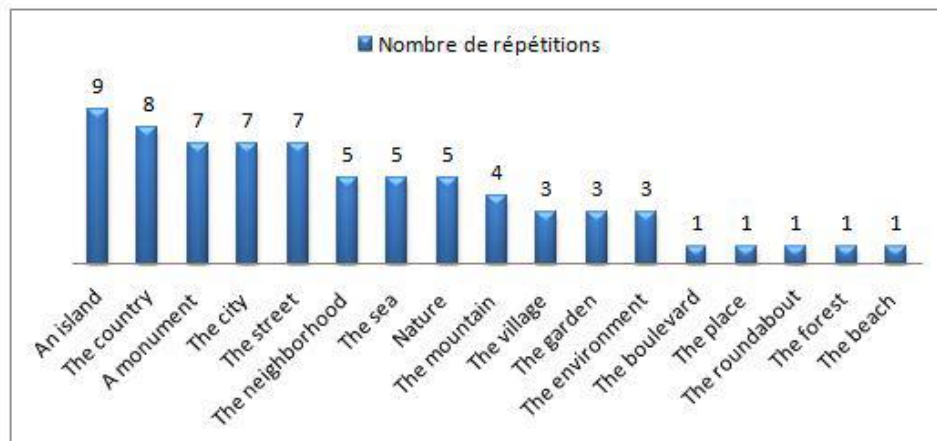


Fig6: Landscape designations in the French module for grade 5 students according to the number of repetitions

According to Figure6, the natural landscape is designated by the island, the sea, the nature, the mountain, the forest and the garden. We no longer find the primary designations such as flowers, trees, etc. It is evoked through identity components of this type of space. The urban landscape is defined by the city, the street, the neighborhood, the boulevard and the public square. It is the components of the urban environment that present themselves as its designations. Similarly, the rural landscape is indicated through one of its specific entities, namely the village. It has already been mentioned that the study of the environment challenges the notion of landscape and that its teaching positions it as one of the designations of this concept. This is still valid for monuments and identity elements of a given country, city or region. Their presences refer us to a particular type

of space, which is why they are considered as landscape designations in this manual. Thus, we have just demonstrated the presence of the landscape in the content of the French module of the 5th year and we have drawn up a list of designations mentioned, but what about the manual of the 6th year? The French textbook consists of 8 modules, each consisting of 3 lessons. The results of the analysis grid confirm the presence of the notion of landscape in the content of the lessons.

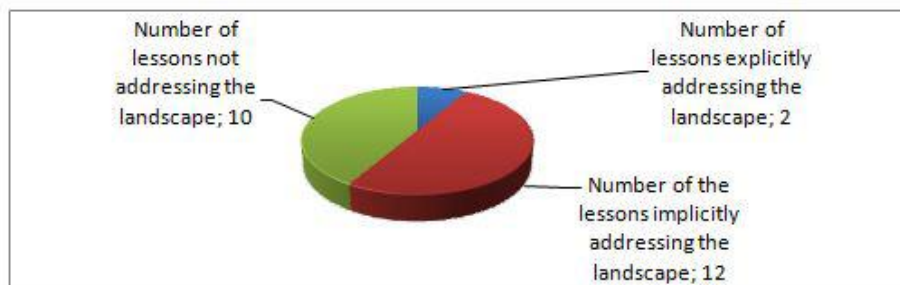


Fig7: Breakdown of French lessons for 6th year students on the notion of landscape

This graph shows that a total of 24 lessons, 12 of them address the landscape in an implicit way. They present it only as a spatial framework for learning other notions. This is valid for the different types and designations of the landscape. They are treated as secondary skills to be able to learn when teaching different concepts. The learner, through this tacit learning, enriches his knowledge and learns an appropriate vocabulary to understand, perceive and describe a landscape. The analysis has, again, demonstrated the presence of two lessons directly abounding the landscape. One of them is about the rural landscape, its components, its highlights and its typical activities. It focuses on agricultural practices to define this type of space. The student is at the same time initiated to the rural environment and the activities related to agriculture and lifestyles in the countryside. The second lesson tackling the landscape in a country, city or region. The study of these monuments challenges different types of landscape and evokes certain spaces. This integrates heritage, history, identity into landscape education. But there are other designations referring to French module for Grade 6 students?

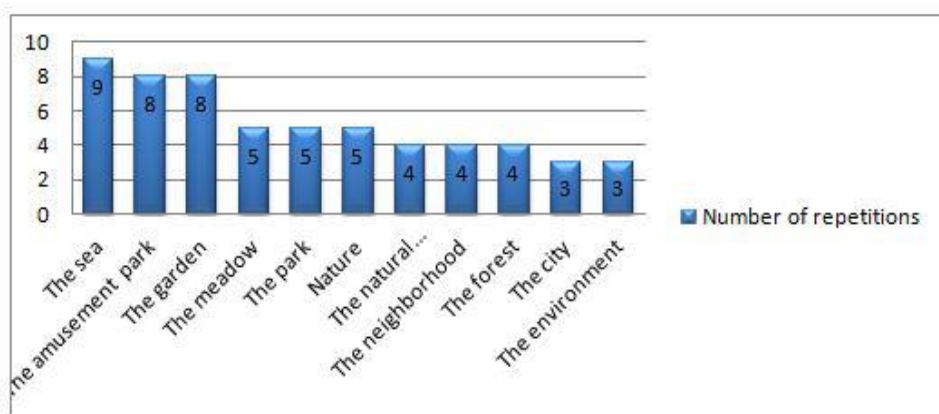


Fig8: The landscape designations in the French module for grade 6 students according to the number of repetitions

At first glance, we notice that the number of landscape designations is lower than those mentioned in the textbook of the 5th grade. We note that the natural landscape is the most mentioned in the manual, insofar as it has the most notions referring to it. The sea, the nature, the natural environment, the forest, the park and the garden are all representations of nature, both wild and man-made. The rural landscape is designated by the simple notion of the prairie and the rural landscape is designated by the concept of the district and the city. The environment continues to be part of the landscape designations by treating it according to its ecological and naturalistic dimension. What we can conclude from this analysis is that the designations identified in the French textbook of the 5th year are more elaborate and make students more aware of the landscape, more than those mentioned in the 6th year textbook.

IV. CONCLUSION

Following the curricular analysis of the two textbooks of the Arabic language and the French language specific to the 3rd degree of basic education in Tunisia, we confirm the integration of the concept of landscape in a direct way (subject of the lesson) and indirect ways (spatial framework of a given situation). We also note the progression in the introduction of notions related to the landscape from one lesson to another or as class passages progress. The concept of landscape encompasses different designations and has different archetypes (rural landscape, mountain landscape, urban landscape, etc.). The concepts at the 6th grade level reach very advanced reflections pertaining to regional planning and the organization of cities and agricultural domains. The language manuals allow, then, landscape awareness and a landscape education of learners.

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