

Cultural Values in French Textbook for Beginner Learners


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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history Received May 22, 2023 Revised Dec 15, 2023 Accepted Dec 19, 2023</p> <p>Keywords Cultural Representation French as a Foreign Language (FLE) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Intercultural Competence</p>	<p>This study examines the representation of French cultural values in the <i>Tendances A1</i> textbook, which is widely used in Indonesia for teaching French as a Foreign Language (FLE). Adopting a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, the research investigates how cultural elements are conveyed both textually and visually through Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of description, interpretation, and explanation. Using Widodo's (2018) model of cultural dimensions respect for cultural differences, indigenous cultures, harmony with life and nature, and appreciation for local creativity the study categorizes and analyzes content drawn from dialogues, images, and thematic contexts. Descriptive statistics and qualitative coding show that seven of nine cultural aspects from the unité culture framework are present, including daily life, interpersonal relationships, values and beliefs, living conditions, manners, and rituals. These aspects emerge through scenes of social greetings like <i>La Bise</i>, family dynamics, leisure habits, gift-giving, and home preferences, reflecting both explicit and implicit ideologies. The findings suggest that <i>Tendances A1</i> successfully integrates linguistic and cultural competence, enabling learners to gain not only language skills but also awareness of French social norms and values; however, the study also notes the need for greater cultural diversity and contextualization to avoid stereotypes. Ultimately, the research underscores the importance of embedding authentic, varied cultural content in language education to promote meaningful, globally conscious communication.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">This is an open access article under the CC-BY license.</p> 

I. Introduction

A. Language and Culture

Language learning cannot be separated from culture, as language is one of the elements of culture, meaning language and culture are closely connected. Widodo (2018) believes that foreign language learners must be able to communicate with people of different languages and backgrounds, including cultural differences. Language is one of the cultural products of every nation, which is why each country has many other languages. As a cultural product, language learning is inseparable from cultural learning. One way to learn about a country's culture is by studying the language, because the goal of learning a language is not only to master the language itself but also to understand and delve into cultural aspects. This allows language learners to behave appropriately within the social and cultural practices of the language community they are studying (Benoit, 2017). According to Sumarsono (in Triyanto, 2019), language is also a social or cultural product that serves as a medium for the entire society to express social aspirations and behave within society.

According to the information from l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie released in 2024, French is the fifth most widely spoken language globally, with 321 million speakers.

In Indonesia, learning French is regarded as the study of French as a foreign language, commonly referred to as Français Langue Étrangère (FLE). This is because the official language of Indonesia is Indonesian, and French is not spoken natively within the country. As such, FLE is taught to Indonesian students who are learning French as a second language. The French Ministry, in a statement quoted in the 2016 French journal *L'Enseignement et L'Apprentissage du Français Langue Étrangère dans Un Environnement des TIC*, explains the concept of FLE, stating: "Le FLE, c'est-à-dire la langue française enseignée à des apprenants qui n'utilisent pas la langue française comme sa langue maternelle." This translates to "FLE refers to the teaching of the French language to learners who do not use French as their native language."

Learning French as a foreign language in Indonesia is not limited to the study of French grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. FLE also includes an essential component of

cultural learning. This integration of culture into language instruction is a critical aspect of FLE, as it allows learners to understand the language in its full context. French culture, encompassing social customs, educational practices, political history, literature, and other fields, is intricately tied to the language itself. The inclusion of cultural elements helps learners grasp the nuances of the language and understand its various expressions and idiomatic phrases, many of which are deeply rooted in French cultural practices.

One of the primary reasons for incorporating French culture into the FLE curriculum is that many aspects of the French language are inherently linked to its cultural context. As Elmia (2013) asserts, "*Faut-il important d'apprendre de la culture française pour les apprenants du français. C'est pourquoi il existe le cours Civilisation Française.*" This emphasizes that it is crucial to learn about French culture for students of the French language, which is why courses like *Civilisation Française* (French Civilization) exist. Through such courses, learners are not only exposed to the structure of the French language but also to the historical, social, and cultural frameworks that shape its use. This approach enriches the language-learning experience, helping students connect with the language in a more profound and meaningful way.

By incorporating cultural lessons, FLE programs in Indonesia aim to produce well-rounded learners who are not only proficient in the French language but also possess a deeper understanding of French society. This combination of language and culture enhances students' ability to communicate effectively and navigate cultural differences, a skill that is invaluable in our increasingly globalized world.

Through the theory of Holec (in Zaraté, 1988) regarding the aspect of civilization in foreign language teaching and Neuner (2003) about cultural elements in textbooks, it is known that culture in textbooks can be delivered through photos, illustrations, and texts. The civilization theory used in this research divides culture into three aspects: history (*Histoire de groupe humain*), society (*Société*), and products (*Productions de tous ordres*). The research also identifies the function of cultural dimensions in textbooks: *Savoir*, *Savoir-faire*, and *Savoir-vivre*. The study results show that cultural aspects are specifically presented according to the themes and contexts in "Premier contact" and "Regard Sur." Culture is often viewed as a reflection of civilization (Brody, 2003), particularly in its formal aspects, such as established institutions (social, political, and economic), notable historical figures, and achievements in literature, fine arts, and science. These elements are typically considered part of elite or high culture (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996, p. 44).

On the other hand, culture can also be defined as the everyday lifestyle of a specific community, a focus commonly explored by sociologists and anthropologists.

This broader view includes elements such as housing, clothing, cuisine, tools, modes of transport, and behavior patterns essential to that group's identity (Bennett et al., 2003). When learning a new language, it's critical to understand the language itself and the cultural context in which it is used. Language reflects the culture it comes from and often portrays other cultures. Paige et al. (2003) argue that cultural content in language textbooks tends to be fragmented and overly generalized, typically reflecting only surface-level behavior. Without real-life cultural experiences or awareness of individual differences, learners might wrongly assume that these behaviors are universally applicable, potentially leading to misunderstandings, prejudice, or stereotyping.

B. Textbooks in Language Learning

Textbooks are a fundamental component of language instruction (Widodo, 2014). They are key tools for organizing teaching and learning processes (Rowland & Barrs, 2013). For example, textbooks are crucial in enacting curricular reforms in foreign language education in Indonesia. With textbooks as a guide, educators can structure lessons and manage learning activities inside and outside the classroom. Despite their usefulness, textbooks should not be followed uncritically. Teachers are encouraged to adapt textbook content according to their specific educational settings and the cultural context in which the language is taught (Widodo, 2014). Effective teaching involves balancing the curriculum content with the needs of the students, the target language, and the educator's style (Tomlinson, 2012). Textbooks must also adhere to national standards, avoiding content that promotes extremism, violence, discriminatory ideologies, or gender bias. Beyond teaching language, textbooks are crafted to align with policy goals and convey ideological messages (Benham & Mozaheb, 2013; Setyono & Widodo, 2019). They can be understood as (1) vehicles for official curriculum ideologies (Van Dijk, 2001); (2) influential in shaping student identity by transmitting specific worldviews (Awayed-Bishara, 2015; Widodo, 2018); and (3) tools for embedding both universal and culturally specific values in learners (Gebregeorgis, 2017). In this sense, textbooks serve as language resources and cultural instruments that subtly introduce various values and agendas (Chapelle, 2016). The extent and nature of cultural representation in textbooks can vary. Some highlight the native culture for comparative purposes, while others aim for a more balanced portrayal of multiple cultures. Based on the principle of pluralism, multicultural values celebrate diversity across ethnic, religious, social, political, and economic backgrounds (Cecilia, 2012). Such values promote understanding, respect, and tolerance among different groups.

Because textbooks include texts that reflect the writers' and editors' viewpoints shaped by curricular ideologies, they often serve dual roles: delivering educational content and promoting specific values (Benham & Mozaheb,

2013; Setyono & Widodo, 2019). Thus, textbooks are interpreted as (1) embodiments of curriculum ideologies (van Dijk, 2001), (2) key tools for conveying ideas and shaping identities (Awayed-Bishara, 2015; Widodo, 2018), and (3) vehicles for instilling cultural and social values (Gebregeorgis, 2017). Textbooks not only teach language but also convey other agendas or lessons.

Despite the increasing demand for French language education in Indonesia, there is a noticeable gap in analyzing the cultural aspects of French Language Education (FLE) textbooks, particularly in the context of Indonesian learners. While several studies have examined the role of culture in foreign language teaching, few have specifically focused on how French culture is represented in FLE textbooks used in Indonesia. This research gap is significant, as integrating cultural elements in language teaching is crucial in fostering a more profound understanding and communication across cultures. Pu et Huang (2018) and Rivero Vila (2014) emphasize that cultural representation in textbooks shapes students' perceptions and comprehension of the target language. In Indonesia, where French is taught as a foreign language, it is essential to analyze how French culture is presented in FLE textbooks to ensure that the teaching material facilitates language acquisition and enriches students' cultural awareness. The findings from this analysis could contribute to improving French language teaching strategies in Indonesia, providing a more culturally immersive learning experience that goes beyond language structure and aligns with current educational trends. By focusing on contemporary FLE textbooks, such as *Tendance A1*, this research explores how verbal and visual representations of French culture can support effective and contextually relevant language learning in Indonesia.

This study, therefore, seeks to answer the following questions:

- How is the concept of culture represented in this French textbook?
- How are the socio-cultural aspects of France depicted in the *Tendance A1* textbook?

How is the idea of culture represented verbally and visually in the French textbook?.

II. Method

This study examines how cultural values are represented in the French as a Foreign Language (FLE) textbook used by Indonesian learners. Specifically, the research focuses on the ways in which cultural narratives are embedded within the textbook to influence students' understanding of multicultural values and practices. To conduct this investigation, the researchers employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the primary methodological approach. CDA was chosen for its capacity to dissect both verbal and visual forms of communication, revealing how texts construct and convey

social meanings within their cultural context. As Setyono and Widodo (2019) note, CDA allows for an in-depth exploration of how language, through its various forms, can shape and reflect social norms and ideologies, which is particularly pertinent in the realm of language education.

In this study, the selected textbook for analysis was *Tendances A1 – méthode de français*, authored by Jacky Girardet, Jacques Pécheur, Colette Gibbe, and Marie-Louise Pariget. *Tendances A1* is widely used in Indonesia, particularly in higher education institutions and secondary schools, making it a relevant and significant text for the research. The textbook was chosen not only because of its widespread use across four universities and several senior high schools with French language programs but also because it was developed with the support of the French Institute of Indonesia (Institut Français Indonésie). This institutional backing highlights the textbook's authenticity and alignment with French language teaching standards, further cementing its importance as a resource in Indonesian French language education.

The research process began with a comprehensive review of all chapters in the textbook, ensuring a thorough examination of the materials. The researchers systematically extracted both verbal and non-verbal elements from the textbook to facilitate a complete analysis. Verbal elements, such as written texts, dialogues, and exercises, were scrutinized for their linguistic features and cultural content. Similarly, non-verbal components, including images, illustrations, and captions, were analyzed to explore how visual representations contribute to the construction of cultural meaning. Each of these elements was carefully read and interpreted to understand its content, context, and its role in shaping students' perceptions of French culture. The systematic extraction of these components allowed the researchers to form a comprehensive understanding of how cultural values are embedded and communicated within the textbook, both through language and imagery.

By using CDA, this study aims to uncover the underlying cultural narratives presented to Indonesian learners of French, providing insights into how these textbooks contribute to the construction of cultural identities and perceptions in the language learning process. Ultimately, this research highlights the importance of critically examining language learning materials, as they play a central role in shaping students' views on language and culture, influencing their broader understanding of the world.

To identify cultural values within the material, the researchers adopted a framework from Widodo (2018), which outlines four key cultural dimensions:

- Respect for cultural differences
- Respect for indigenous cultures
- Harmony with nature and life

- Appreciation for creative and local cultural products

Using the CDA framework, the researchers carefully categorized and coded the relevant data to identify key cultural representations in the FLE textbook. Each instance of cultural content was reviewed multiple times to ensure coding accuracy and consistency, ensuring that the interpretations were reliable and robust. To quantify the prevalence of specific cultural values throughout the textbook, descriptive statistics were employed, allowing the researchers to determine the proportion of each cultural value represented. This step provided a clear picture of how different cultural themes were distributed across the content.

In addition to this quantitative analysis, selected examples from the textbook were examined in greater depth through a qualitative lens. This more detailed examination allowed for a deeper understanding of how multicultural values were articulated and embedded within the textbook's verbal and visual elements. By focusing on specific instances, the researchers were able to uncover the subtleties of how cultural meanings were conveyed, as well as how these representations might influence learners' understanding of French culture. This nuanced analysis provided important insights into the textbook's role in promoting cultural awareness among French language learners in Indonesia, revealing both explicit and implicit cultural messages present in the material.

Using this framework, the researchers categorized and coded the relevant data. Each instance was reviewed multiple times to ensure coding accuracy and reliability. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the proportion of each cultural value across the textbook. Finally, selected examples from the textbook were analyzed in greater depth to reveal how multicultural values are articulated and embedded within the content. This qualitative step allowed for a nuanced understanding of the textbook's role in promoting cultural awareness among French language learners in Indonesia.

A. Data Collection Procedures and Stages of CDA Analysis

The data collection process was designed to follow a rigorous and systematic methodology, consistent with the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as articulated by Fairclough (2001). CDA serves as a framework for understanding how discourse is connected to power dynamics, social structures, and cultural ideologies. In this study, three primary stages of CDA were employed to examine the FLE (Français Langue Étrangère) textbook: description, interpretation, and explanation. Each of these stages was strategically structured to explore and analyze the various ways in which the textbook conveys cultural values and meanings,

and how these representations align with or challenge broader societal ideologies.

1) Description

The first stage of the CDA process, description, involved a detailed and systematic examination of the textual elements within the FLE textbook. This stage required researchers to closely analyze both the verbal and non-verbal components of the text. The verbal elements included an in-depth review of the language used within the textbook, focusing on vocabulary choices, sentence structures, and the overall linguistic framework. Researchers were particularly attentive to how language might reflect or reproduce specific cultural ideologies, particularly those related to French society. Simultaneously, the non-verbal elements, such as images, illustrations, and captions, were critically examined for their symbolic significance and their relationship to the verbal text. The purpose of this dual analysis was to categorize the various textual components and identify how cultural representations were embedded in the material, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the textbook as a cultural artifact. Through this description, researchers aimed to ascertain not only the explicit linguistic features but also the implicit cultural messages conveyed by the visual and textual content.

2) Interpretation

In the second stage, interpretation, the focus shifted to analyzing the relationships between the verbal and non-verbal elements of the textbook. This stage aimed to uncover how the interplay between written language and visual representation contributed to the construction of meaning within the text. Researchers explored the ways in which these elements interact to convey specific cultural values, norms, and ideologies. For example, certain visual representations, such as photographs or illustrations, might evoke particular cultural ideas or social norms that are central to French identity. The researchers also explored how these representations could function as tools for cultural transmission, subtly guiding students toward specific cultural understandings. Furthermore, interpretation in this context included an exploration of how students, particularly those from Indonesia, might perceive these elements. Since cultural background significantly shapes perception, this stage considered the ways in which students' local cultural contexts could influence their interpretation of the textbook's content. Researchers investigated whether students, drawing on their own cultural experiences and socialization, would interpret the cultural representations in the textbook in ways that differ from those intended by the authors or the institutions behind the textbook.

3) Explanation

The final stage of CDA, explanation, provided a critical examination of how the cultural representations identified in the previous stages reflect broader societal power dynamics, ideologies, and practices. This phase

aimed to explore the social implications of the textbook's content and how it contributes to the reinforcement or challenge of prevailing cultural narratives. The explanation stage required researchers to contextualize the textbook within the socio-political and cultural frameworks in which it was produced. In particular, the researchers considered the influence of the French Institute of Indonesia (IFI) in shaping the textbook's content, given the Institute's role in promoting the French language and culture in Indonesia. This stage also critically evaluated the ideological stance embedded within the textbook's representation of French culture. Researchers examined whether the textbook reinforced traditional notions of French culture or presented a more nuanced, diverse, or even subversive view of French society. Additionally, this phase involved reflecting on how the textbook's portrayal of French culture might influence students' perceptions not only of French society but also of their own local culture. By analyzing the textbook as a cultural object, researchers investigated how the material might shape students' understanding of cultural identity, global interconnectivity, and cultural relativism.

Through these three stages, the study revealed how the Tendances A1 textbook constructs and communicates cultural meanings. It demonstrated the ways in which these cultural representations have the potential to influence language learners in Indonesia, shaping their understanding of both the target culture and their cultural context. By critically engaging with the textbook through the lens of CDA, the study highlighted the role of educational materials in perpetuating or challenging dominant cultural narratives, providing insights into the complex relationship between language, culture, and power.

III. Results and Discussion

The practice of kissing on the cheek, commonly known as "La Bise," represents a significant form of informal greeting or social interaction, particularly among family members, friends, and close colleagues. This cultural gesture is commonly observed in French society, where it is employed to express affection, familiarity, and social bonding. La Bise is not confined to a specific gender, and it can be performed between women, between men, or between a woman and a man. It is, however, crucial to note that the practice of La Bise extends beyond simple social etiquette; it is deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of French society, acting as a subtle yet potent expression of interpersonal relationships and social norms, can be seen in Figure 1.



Fig. 1. "La Bise" Social Practice as a Cultural Greeting in France.

Figure 2 contains introductory topics from various countries, including Indonesia.



Fig. 2. Diverse Cultural Introductions Featured in FLE Textbooks

Figure 3 presents a series of images that illustrate various family habits and routines, offering a detailed depiction of everyday life across different households. The visual representations highlight a range of daily activities, which are essential to understanding the structure and rhythms of family life. These include the time at which the day typically begins, showcasing the varied starting points of daily routines within different family contexts.



Fig. 3. Daily Family Routines as Reflections of Everyday Life

By presenting these activities through visual means, Figure 3 not only captures the unique aspects of each family's daily life but also provides insights into the broader cultural, social, and lifestyle differences that shape family routines. These images serve as a valuable tool for analyzing how cultural norms, socio-economic status, and personal preferences influence daily practices.

On Sundays in France, most offices and a significant number of shops remain closed, with the notable exception of Paris, where the bustling city life continues unabated. While many commercial establishments are closed, Sundays in France are far from uneventful, as they are marked by a variety of social and cultural activities that shape the French experience of the weekend, as can be seen in Figure 4.



Fig. 4. Sunday Activities in French Society

In the morning, open-air markets and garage sales become vibrant hubs of activity, offering fresh produce, local goods, and second-hand treasures. As the day progresses, young people tend to wake up later than usual, as Sunday mornings are often a time for relaxation and recuperation. Following their late start, they gather with friends, frequently meeting at cafés for leisurely lunches, which are an essential part of French social life. The café culture, with its emphasis on enjoying food and drinks in a relaxed atmosphere, plays a central role in the Sunday routine for many. Afternoons on Sundays are typically spent engaging in cultural or physical activities. Many young people head to the cinema to catch the latest films, while others partake in sports or outdoor activities.

One of the most significant aspects of Sunday in France is the tradition of sharing a meal with family or friends. It is common for people to visit their parents' or grandparents' homes for a family lunch or to enjoy a meal together at a restaurant. These gatherings are not just about the food but also about bonding and maintaining strong family and social ties. Overall, Sundays in France are characterized by a blend of relaxation, social engagement, and cultural activities, offering a balance between rest and the enjoyment of life's simple pleasures.

Figure 5 explains the family tree in France. Although calling parents' names directly is common in France, many teach their children to contact parents with the more polite title Papa or Maman, or other terms of endearment. In France, 83% of the time, the child uses the father's last name when a child is born. When a woman gets married, she keeps her last name. She can also use her husband's name. Apart from the issue of names, other things highlight cultural differences in families in France. Parents carry out the pattern of raising children from childhood. This is the same as in Indonesia, but babies do not sleep together with their parents in the sense of sleeping separately from their parents. Children are involved in decision-making from an early age, and other responsibilities include providing space for them to talk and express themselves. French families often eat together, creating moments of togetherness and learning about food and habits.



Fig. 5. Family Structure and Traditions in France

A. Recreation

In France, young people between the ages of 15 and 30 constitute a significant demographic in terms of cultural participation, with cinema emerging as their primary form of entertainment and leisure activity. The cinema holds a special place in French society, where it is not only a popular pastime but also an important cultural experience. This age group frequently visits cinemas, making it a leading tourist destination for those seeking both entertainment and a deeper engagement with French film culture, which has historically been a central part of the nation's artistic heritage can be seen in Figure 6.



Fig. 6. French Youth Recreation: Cinema and Music as Cultural Identity.

In addition to cinema, music concerts are another favored activity among French youth. Music holds a cherished place in French culture, with a rich tradition spanning various genres, from classical and jazz to contemporary pop and electronic music. Concerts, whether large-scale performances or intimate shows, are regularly attended by young people who are eager to experience live music and connect with the dynamic, ever-evolving music scene.

The French population's deep affinity for music and vibrant social gatherings is further evidenced by the popularity of public celebrations, including carnivals, birthday parties, and music clubs. These events are characterized by their lively atmosphere and are often marked by large crowds, reflecting the French cultural love for communal experiences. Festivals and carnivals, in particular, serve as vital expressions of cultural identity, where people from all walks of life come together to celebrate, dance, and enjoy shared traditions. Music clubs, as well, provide a space for both social interaction and personal expression, offering a dynamic environment where people gather to enjoy music and dance late into the night.

Overall, for young people in France, these activities are not only a means of entertainment but also a way of connecting with their cultural heritage, socializing with peers, and engaging in the nation's rich traditions of music, film, and collective celebrations. Whether in the cinema, at a concert, or amidst the revelry of a carnival or music club, these experiences contribute significantly to the vibrant social and cultural fabric of contemporary French society.

B. Writing Postcard/Travel E-mail

In France, writing postcards remains a beloved tradition when traveling or visiting new places. Passed down from childhood, this practice is instilled by parents as a meaningful way to share travel experiences. Travelers typically buy postcards featuring images of the places they visit and write messages about their vacation. These postcards serve as both a form of communication and a way to preserve memories, allowing individuals to share their experiences with loved ones. In an age of digital communication, sending postcards remains a nostalgic and personal way for the French to connect with family and friends, offering a tangible reminder of their journeys.

In France, gift-giving is an important tradition for various occasions, such as weddings, anniversaries, and year-end celebrations. Couples often provide a list of preferred gifts for weddings, making it easier for guests to select something they would appreciate. When invited to someone's home, it is customary to bring flowers, a bottle of wine, a book, or a unique gift. Alternatively, friends may decide to contribute a dessert or a meal together. Gifts are also given when returning from a long trip as a gesture of thoughtfulness.

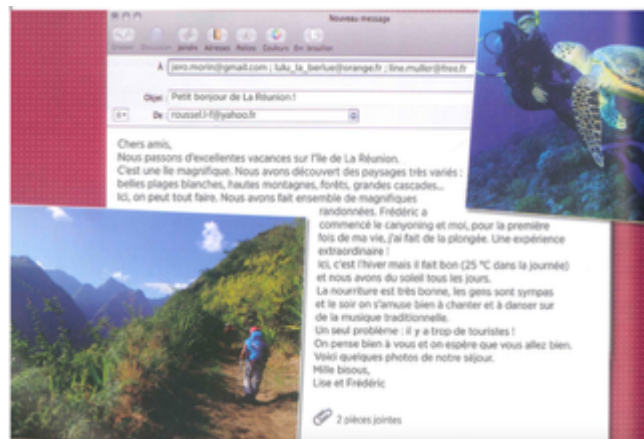


Fig. 7. Postcards and Traditional Communication in Travel Culture

In professional settings, colleagues often give a collective gift to someone leaving, whether for retirement, moving to another company, or transferring to a different department. When receiving a gift, it is customary to open it and express gratitude with a few words of thanks.



Fig. 8. Gift-Giving Traditions in Social and Professional Contexts

When the French were surveyed about their ideal living situation, a significant 72% expressed a preference for a house in the countryside. This reflects a widespread desire for a peaceful and spacious environment, away from the hustle and bustle of urban life. The preference for rural living often aligns with ideals of tranquility, nature, and a more relaxed pace of life. While this aspiration is not entirely realized, it is partly fulfilled, as 57% of the French

population currently resides in houses, suggesting that many have managed to achieve a more expansive living space. In contrast, 43% of the population lives in apartments, particularly in urban areas where space is limited, and housing density is higher.



Fig. 9. Lifestyle Preferences in France: The Countryside Dream

IV. Conclusion

This study has undertaken a comprehensive examination of the representation of cultural values within the French as a Foreign Language (FLE) textbook *Tendance A1*, which was published in 2016. The focus of the research was on how French culture is portrayed and conveyed to Indonesian learners of French, with particular attention to the ways in which cultural elements are embedded in both the verbal and visual components of the textbook. Utilizing a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, the study analysed a wide range of cultural representations present in the textbook, shedding light on how language and culture intersect within the materials provided.

The results of the analysis indicate that *Tendance A1* offers a multifaceted representation of French culture, incorporating both tangible and intangible cultural elements that span several key thematic areas. These include aspects of daily life, deeply ingrained values and beliefs, interpersonal relationships, living standards, manners, and ritual behaviours. Each of these cultural themes was articulated through a variety of mediums, including written texts, visual imagery, and other representational devices. Together, these elements work to present a holistic and nuanced view of French culture, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding for learners.

One of the key findings of this study is the effective integration of both concrete and abstract cultural aspects in the textbook. For instance, social behaviours such as *la bise* (cheek kissing), familial structures, and leisure activities in France are depicted as integral parts of everyday life, thereby offering learners authentic glimpses into the societal norms and practices of the target culture. In addition to these social customs, representations of cultural practices such as gift-giving and idealized living

situations further underscore the diversity of French cultural values. These representations serve not only to deepen the learners' understanding of French society but also to foster a stronger connection between language acquisition and cultural competence.

The research underscores the critical role of incorporating cultural elements into foreign language textbooks. Far from being mere supplementary material, cultural representations should be viewed as an essential and integrated component of the language learning process. By incorporating cultural content alongside language structure, textbooks such as *Tendance A1* enable learners to engage with the language on a deeper, more meaningful level. This approach promotes not only linguistic proficiency but also cultural competence, which is indispensable for effective communication in the target language.

Moreover, the findings suggest that cultural representations in language textbooks are crucial for helping students navigate the social and cultural complexities of the language community they are studying. Understanding the cultural context in which a language is spoken enriches learners' ability to use the language appropriately and sensitively in various social settings. The study thus advocates for a more explicit focus on cultural content within language learning materials, with the aim of promoting greater cultural awareness and intercultural understanding.

In conclusion, *Tendance A1* effectively provides learners with a rich and varied cultural context that is essential for mastering the French language. The study emphasizes the importance of continued exploration of cultural values in language learning materials, advocating for an inclusive and diverse approach that reflects the multicultural realities of the French-speaking world. Such an approach ensures that textbooks do not merely teach the mechanics of language but also equip learners with the cultural knowledge necessary for navigating real-world linguistic interactions. By doing so, textbooks can play a pivotal role in fostering both linguistic fluency and intercultural competence among learners of French.

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