

Folk Chants and the Representation of Identity in the Age of Globalization: A Structural–Semantic Analysis

Dr.Elaguab Fatiha*

University of Ziane Achour Djelfa
(Algeria)

f.elaguab@univ-djelfa.dz

Received: 02/03/2026

Accepted: 06/05/2026

Published: 09/06/ 2026

Abstract

This study aims to explore the role of folk songs associated with children in representing cultural identity in the age of globalization, with particular emphasis on their educational and socializing functions. The research problem arises from the question of the extent to which these songs contribute to instilling values and cultural identity in children amidst the impacts of globalization on the local cultural environment. The study seeks to classify the types of children's folk songs, analyze their structure and meaning, and examine their educational and pedagogical roles. The significance of the research lies in highlighting the relationship between popular heritage and the development of children's artistic and literary sensibilities, as well as reinforcing their cultural belonging. The study adopts a descriptive-analytical methodology, drawing on references related to folk heritage and children's literature. The findings reveal that lullabies and play songs enhance children's values, language, imagination, and collective belonging, serving as an effective means of transmitting traditions and ideas, despite the simplicity of their musical and linguistic forms.

Key Words: Folk Songs, Children's Literature, Identity, Globalization, Lullabies

* Dr.Elaguab Fatiha:

Introduction

Globalization, which has penetrated minds, is a double edged sword. When it aligns with modernity but is misused or exploited, it threatens the very foundations of identity. It contributes to the melting of distinctive cultural differences into a Westernized identity that erases uniqueness. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize the danger now facing our Arab societies and to seek solutions before they are alienated from one another, leading to the estrangement of citizens within the same nation, which in turn facilitates control and exploitation.

The child represents the foundational unit from which a sense of belonging should be nurtured, guiding them toward a form of modernity that serves them while preserving the core elements of their identity. Play may serve as a window through which these values and discourses are instilled in the child's mind. The messages the child receives often in the form of rhymes suited to their age are created by popular culture in harmony with its principles, preserving its uniqueness and preventing blind adherence to a globalization that exploits gaps to spread divisive discourse.

Modernity does not negate traditions, religion, or social particularities, and recognizing this point is essential for preserving identity. To what extent, then, do children's rhymes (folk songs specific to children) contribute to consolidating concepts of identity? What are the foundational elements and values they encode, through which the child becomes consciously or unconsciously aware of the connections that foster belonging to their community, nation, and broader cultural or religious group?

1. Children's Rhymes: Concept and Characteristics

Rhymes are considered among the poetic forms most closely connected to humans. A rhyme is a popular, lyrical song, derived from the root (h z j). As defined by Al Fayrouz Abadi in *Al Qamus Al Muhit*, under the entry (h z j):

"Al hazj, in its active sense, refers to songs with a melodic intonation. And 'hazaja' means to sing joyfully."

Hazj is an ancient art known to the Arabs since pre Islamic times, though it was referred to by various names. Among these are what is known as children's dancing rhymes, Rajaz, which they chanted in wars, and Huda', which was used to urge camels to move forward.(Abdel Hakim. 2019.p. 11)

A children's rhyme is a folk song that embodies the customs and beliefs of peoples, reflects their hopes, and carries their concerns. As Fawzi Al 'Antil defined it:

"A lyrical, melodic poem of unknown origin that appeared among the common people in past times and remained in circulation for a long period." (Fawzi. p. 245)

Perhaps the concept offered by Ibrahim Fadel comes closest to capturing its essence, as he emphasized several distinguishing features: spontaneity, the emotive character governed by its words, the simplicity of its style, the primitiveness of its musical instruments, and its direct expression of emotional moments and sensitivity. These characteristics often give its texts a predominance of sorrow and a personal, individual mood.(Jaafar. 1980. p. 26)

This type of popular literary form has received considerable attention from scholars because it combines words, melody, performance, and dance, sometimes incorporating traditional musical instruments. The first step toward its scientific study was undertaken by Harder in his book "Voices of the Peoples from Their Songs", in which he collected and classified folk songs .(Ahmed. p. 107)

Thus, children's rhymes are those folk songs associated with children, constituting a form of children's literature and a means of cultivating their artistic sensibility and literary taste. They employ simple, comprehensible words and melodies capable of attracting and entertaining the child, in harmony with their inclinations and desires, while also developing their values, attitudes, language, thinking, and imagination.(Ishrah . 2005. p. 104)

In addition to being used for play or to lull the child to sleep, folk songs directed at children are educational. They contain human, religious, and scientific values,

which allow them to transcend mere entertainment and instead help instill identity based values, cultivate a sense of collective awareness in young learners, and strengthen their sense of belonging.

2. Types of Children's Rhymes

Based on our review of folk songs associated with children, we observe that they can be divided into three types:

A. Lullabies (Ahadhadah Songs):

Lullabies are part of the oral folk heritage passed down through generations, used to soothe, rock, or play with children to calm them. Scholars, however, differ on whether lullabies belong to children's literature. For instance, Abdel Razzaq Jaafar rejects including lullabies within children's literature, arguing that they speak *about* children rather than directly *to* them.(Jaafar.1979. p. 236) In contrast, Al Ruba'i bin Salama disagrees, stating:"The young age of the child does not prevent attributing poetry to them, just as the fact that it reflects or expresses the wishes of adults or their vision of what they want their sons and daughters to become in the future does not prevent this. The child interacts from an early age with the music of this poetry, and even if they do not understand its meaning, they enjoy its rhythms."(Bin Salama. 2009. pp. 92–93)

In fact, lullabies cannot be separated from children's literature. The purpose of a lullaby is to direct a discourse toward the child, and the child's lack of understanding does not negate its communicative function. According to popular belief, the child receives and stores the words they hear. This is why mothers carefully select what is wholesome and pleasing to whisper to their children, making the lullaby a message that conveys their hopes and paints an idealized image of the child's future. For example, in the following excerpt:

Ninni, ninni, sleep has come to Jack,
Your mother is the moon, your father the stars,
And you are a date in its branch,
And a little fish swimming in its sea.

And a howl on the first day,
 Everyone watches over him carefully,
 May my son be safe, may he grow well,
 May he excel in his generation,
 And have his own home to visit and dwell in.

In this lullaby, the mother wishes for her child's safety, growth, success, and a secure home of his own to inhabit. In another verse, she expresses the hope that he will become a doctor:

Ninni, ninni, the wolf your mother
 Went away to the old woman's house,
 Leaving the bread to bake while the cows have no milk.
 Ninni, ninni, my dear,
 Grow up and become a doctor.

Despite their simplicity, these words convey the dreams and wishes of every mother. They do not merely speak about the child; rather, they address the child implicitly, encouraging them to become what the mother hopes for.

Modern psychology also emphasizes speaking to an infant in their cradle, as this enhances language development and prepares them for the stage of verbal communication. Folk knowledge has long recognized the importance of words and rhythm in instilling ideas. Thus, lullabies were developed using a simple structure: short sentences and a light, quick rhythm that encourages the infant to hum along, relax, and drift into a calm, deep sleep, comforted by the sound of the mother's voice resonating in their ears.

B. Play Songs:

These are songs that children sing during their group games. Their words are simple, and their melodies are brief, with the primary aim of creating an exciting atmosphere for the game. Play, as defined,

"is a free, directed, or undirected activity undertaken by children for the purpose of amusement and enjoyment, and is often utilized by adults to contribute to the

development of the child's personality across its various dimensions: cognitive, physical, emotional, and social." (Al-Hila.2003.p. 223)

The rhymes accompanying play enhance enjoyment and enthusiasm, while also contributing to the development and consolidation of the child's skills.

Rhymes constitute a form of children's literature and serve as a means of cultivating their artistic sensibility and literary taste. They employ simple, understandable words and melodies that attract and entertain children in alignment with their interests and desires, while also fostering their values, attitudes, language, thinking, and imagination. (Ishrah . p. 104)These songs are not performed arbitrarily; each song is associated with a specific game. For example, there are songs that accompany rope jumping games:

"Grass, flowers, high mountain,

When I go home, I find my maternal uncles."

In other games, children form a line holding onto each other, resembling a train, while chanting:

"Tee tit, tee tit, the machine (train) has come, the horse will take us."

This phrase presents a striking juxtaposition between a modern means of transportation (the train) and a traditional one (the horse), reflecting aspects of the local environment. The machine (train) was a modern tool, unfamiliar to Algerian society at large; the first railway station in Algeria was inaugurated on August 15, 1862, during the second half of the 19th century.(Théophile .1865. pp. 130–131)

Before the running game, children would choose one participant to chase the others. They would sing a song, assigning each word to a member of the group. Whoever received the last word would be the chaser. Their selection often relied on chants such as:

" monkey, Madi, said to me: take this or that"

or

"Zayti, Zayti, my matchstick, a drop falls into the green water, two francs and a half"

In another song, they incorporated dialogue, with one child randomly assuming the role of the “director” for the selection process:

"Let's play with the ball before the director comes."

"Ding dong, who are you?"

"I am the director."

"What do you want?"

"I want a beautiful girl."

"Who is she?"

"Hmm... let me think... she is ..." (chooses a name)

Despite its simplicity, this game unconsciously teaches children important social skills: dialogue, respecting turns in conversation, and decision making. Through repeated practice, it cultivates in them the ability to choose and interact within a group.

To tickle the child, they would chant:

"The size of the ant, the size of the mouse,

The size of an old woman lighting the fire,

Oh Khadija, oh Madija, oh mouse's ear,

Dug, dug, dug, dug, dug, dug."

In this song, the index and middle fingers are moved along the child's arm up to the armpit, where the tickling occurs. If we examine the meaning, the song carries a symbolic dimension: the tickling is not merely for play. Children are known for being demanding and exhausting, and folk wisdom may have long recognized that tickling can also serve as a subtle form of discipline. From the lyrics, one can understand that the adult is conveying: “Even though you are small, your actions are like those of grown ups, and you must be disciplined.” *The tickling thus begins* as a playful gesture but carries an underlying corrective intent.

The folk creativity that produced children's songs was far from naive. It used the child's inclination toward play as a window to instill ideas through rhymed words with light rhythms, making them easy to memorize and transmit.

C. Occasion Songs:

These are children's songs associated with particular occasions. Children would form circles, chanting their songs accompanied by clapping. For example, when rain fell, they would sing:

"Come down, come down, O rain, and we will slaughter a little goat for you."

In this song, one notices a mythological dimension – the offering of a sacrifice ("we will slaughter a little goat"). In ancient belief, human life was closely associated with blood; thus, life began with the slaughter of animals as offerings to the gods and ended in the same way with sacrifices. People would smear some of the sacrificial blood on what the offering was meant for, believing that the gods perceived the blood of the sacrifice. In this way, the warm blood of the offering would reach the worshiped deity, appease their anger, win their favor, and prompt them to respond by lifting drought and sending rain.

When the crescent moon became full (Ahmed . 2018. p. 66), they would chant:

"O high moon, take me to my uncles;

My uncles are in Tunis, and their supper is berkoukes."

During Ramadan and the Feast ('Eid), they would sing:

"Ramadan has come hey, hey, hey,

Zlabia and cigars hey, hey, hey.

Ramadan has gone hey, hey, hey,

Soup and 'asban hey, hey, hey.

And the Feast has come hey, hey, hey,

New clothes and shoes hey, hey, hey."

When such songs are appropriate to the child's age, scholars may consider them a rich record of the customs and traditions of folk society. From these songs, one can learn about traditional foods – berkoukes, soup, 'asban, zlabia – and about popular customs linked to occasions: traditional dishes associated with Ramadan and new clothing associated with the Feast.

D. Educational Songs:

Children's rhymes accompanying play often include various educational dimensions. The simple words and melodies help reinforce foundational knowledge that a child needs in early developmental stages, ranging from counting to learning colors, days, and months.

Among the songs children chant collectively and which, in addition to being used in play, teach counting are:

"Andraka Dariko,

The elder's shoe is torn.

What is in his hand?

A basket." (spoken by the child on whom the word falls)

"What is inside?"

Eggs." (spoken by the child on whom the word falls)

"How many eggs?" (the number is chosen by the child assigned the word)

*"One, two, three, four, five..." (counting continues until the last number, and the child who receives it chases the others).

It is well known that children become easily bored; they do not enjoy staying in one place or posture, dislike stillness, and love movement. This type of song, associated with play, helps them memorize and acquire counting skills. These songs are sometimes performed individually, with children lined up, while one child recites the lyrics.

For learning numbers in French, they chant:

"Un, deux, trois, les oreilles, quatre, cinq, six, la police, sept, huit, neuf whoever remains is the "chief. "

This song mixes colloquial Arabic and French. Repetition embeds the numbers in the child's mind, allowing them consciously or unconsciously to memorize French numerals while using play to acquire early knowledge useful for primary education.

Children have a strong capacity for memorization, and children's rhymes serve as a vehicle for transmitting folk knowledge. Even if a child resists formal classroom instruction, they readily engage with rhymes and games, absorbing their

educational benefits. For example, learning the names of months may be difficult in isolation, but children memorize them easily when sung in play:

"I have a lemon seed, count up to March:

January, February, March.

I have a pomegranate seed, count up to June:

April, May, June.

I have a berry seed, count up to August:

July, August.

I have a coriander seed, count up to December:

September, October, November, December."

By linking the unfamiliar (month names) with the familiar (lemon, pomegranate, berry, coriander), children can easily memorize the sequence. Repetition of the song reinforces knowledge of months in order.

Children also learn the days of the week through group chants:

"My red box is poor,

He doesn't know how to swear,

Saturday, Sunday, Monday.

My red box, oh shining one,

A tear fell from his eye,

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday."

Through repetition, younger children learn to sequence the days. Children's rhymes support language acquisition and facilitate knowledge that contributes to cognitive development.

For example, to teach the five senses, mothers sing:

"This is the forehead of prayer,

These are the eyes of sight,

This is the nose of smell,

These are the ears of hearing,

This is the mouth of rasis,

This is the goat's beard,

This is the palm of money."

(*Rafis*: a traditional dish from Djelfa made of dates, wheat bread, and sheep butter.)

In the song, the forehead is associated with prayer, emphasizing its importance the first act of worship a child learns is prayer. Then the senses are linked to the responsible organ: eyes for seeing, nose for smelling, ears for hearing, or indirectly (e.g., *mouth of rafis* for tasting, *palm of money* for touching coins).

Children's rhymes go beyond mere play, which supports the child's psyche and personality. They also reinforce language, enrich knowledge, and prepare children for later stages of development. Some argue that these songs no longer resonate with modern children and that folk creativity should evolve to meet contemporary needs. In reality, young children require only basic knowledge, which play combined with folk songs can efficiently impart. The true role of these songs is to generate enthusiasm, cultivate collective spirit, and integrate the child into their environment, contributing to a psychologically healthy development.

3. Identity Components in Children's Rhymes:

The developments witnessed globally today in various domains – political, economic, social, intellectual, and cultural – have created an identity crisis. Blind imitation of Western culture, and the indiscriminate adoption of foreign ideas that may not align with the principles of Arab thought, have placed national identity at risk. Globalization and its influences are among the main factors that have caused cracks in the foundations of national identity. The world has become a small village, and irresponsible openness has negatively impacted the preservation of what binds an individual to their nation and determines their belonging and orientation.

Identity is defined as:

"a set of characteristics and attributes – religious, linguistic, conceptual, ethical, cultural, ethnic, historical, geographical, political, customary, and behavioral – that shape the personality of the individual, the group, and the nation, giving it a unique

distinction from other nations. It constitutes the reference framework that expresses one's culture, religion, and civilization."(Al-Raqib. 2009. pp. 26. 28)

In the face of such negative aspects of modernity, which directly affect identity markers, it has become essential to find ways to strengthen the foundations of authentic identity in children. Computers and electronic tablets have isolated the child from their natural childhood world, altering their thoughts and tendencies. Television, through children's channels broadcasting foreign animated films, has further alienated the child from their identity, instilling foreign cultures and values inconsistent with the child's native community. Consequently, the child becomes disconnected from their social, cultural, intellectual, and religious bonds. It is the responsibility of society to reintegrate the child, foster collective awareness, and restore the elements of identity by encouraging participation in group play and rhymes, which enhance enthusiasm, consolidate traditions, and instill religious, ethical, and national values. Children's rhymes carry the heritage of the people, embodying national characteristics and imprinting them onto the child's identity.

A. Religion:

Religion is one of the strongest bonds among individuals and a cornerstone for building authentic identity. While colonial powers historically targeted religion to erase national identity, today globalization targets the child. One of the most important contributions of children's rhymes in preserving identity is their emphasis on religion. For example, in the rhyme:

"Hmayma L'mima,

Decorated with henna patterns,

Where did you sleep last night?

In the righteous garden,

Among apples and sweet fragrances, planted in the tablets,

God, the House of God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God."

- ❖ Diminutives are one of the most distinctive features of the Djelfa dialect, as in (Hmayma, L'mima, Wshima), which are diminutives of (Hamama – pigeon, Um – mother, Weshma – tattoo/mark).
- ❖ “The inscribed in the tablets” refers to the Qur'an that is engraved on the tablets, and from there it is instilled in the hearts. In the past, children memorized the Qur'an in *kuttab* schools by writing the surahs on wooden tablets coated with *silsan* (clay), using *dawayya* (a type of ink handmade from wool)

We can observe a clear religious affiliation: anyone who reads the *ahzaja* (folk rhymes) understands that the popular individual who composed them is a Muslim, affirming the oneness of God and testifying that Muhammad, peace be upon him, is His Messenger (“God, the House of God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God”). One also understands the place of the Qur'an in the hearts of Muslims (*al-maghrus fi al-lawah* – “engraved in the tablets”). By repeating the song during play, the child internalizes the fundamentals of their religion (the two testimonies of faith, the Qur'an), even if they do not grasp the full meaning.

Generally, the song functions as a symbolic address in which the mother speaks to her child (Hmayma L'mima), praising his hands adorned with henna (*mazraqata al-weshma*), asking him where he slept, and he replies: “In the righteous garden, where the fruit of God's remembrance and the sweet fragrance are, and they study the Word of God and remember God and His noble Prophet” (*Win bit al-barah, fi jninat salih, al-tuffah wa al-nafah wa al-maghrus fi al-lawah, Allah wa Bayt Allah wa Muhammad Rasul Allah*).

Here, in her recitation, the mother envisions her child's future, wishing that he will sit among the righteous, study the virtuous remembrance of God, and by conscious or unconscious repetition, the child internalizes these words, which express his religious orientation and his ethnic belonging.

In another rhyme:

"Nanni nanni, sleep has come to you
Your mother is silver and your father is brass
And you are a little gazelle among people
And a little rose placed in a cup
A pebble in the eyes of the unseen
Say: 'I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind'"

(Note: "gazelle" and "rose" are diminutives)

This rhyme contains a direct intertextual reference to the Qur'an, specifically Surah An Nas. In this lullaby, the mother seeks protection for her child from the evil eye of Satan (a pebble in the eyes of the unseen) and from human harm (Say: "I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind"). This clearly demonstrates the presence of religious identity within the rhyme.

It is undeniable that poetic production generally mirrors reality, and popular songs especially those orally transmitted from generation to generation reflect the folk from whom they originate and address their hopes, pains, sense of belonging, and worldview. Religion, as one of the foundational pillars of identity, is inherently present in these traditions. Consequently, when children interact with this literary form during play, they familiarize themselves with their faith, and many of its teachings are imprinted in their minds.

B. Language:

Language is considered "the mirror of the people, the repository of their heritage, the register of their literature, the record of their ambitions, dreams, ideas, and emotions. Beyond that, it is a symbol of their spiritual essence, a marker of their uniqueness and progress, (Jamil .1974. p. 120).and the treasury of their customs and traditions." Language represents distinction and differentiation from others. Therefore, it plays a central role in defending the self through the embodiment of identity.

Folk creativity recognized the importance of language as a link strengthening community ties and sought to embed it in popular literary production. Since the

target audience of children's rhymes is the child, this role was not neglected. For example, in the rhyme:

"My neighbor, oh my neighbor hey!

I am an Arab hey!

I came from Paris hey!

To tell my secret hey!

I entered the garden hey!

I stole the pomegranate hey!

The guard hit me hey!

With a hoe and an axe hey!

Hey, hey, ten, twenty

Hey, hey, thirty, forty

Hey, hey, fifty, sixty

Hey, hey, seventy, eighty

Hey, hey, ninety, one hundred"

Here, the author of the rhyme lived in France (I came from Paris), yet proudly asserts their Arab identity (I am an Arab) and maintains pride in their language. Symbolically, this teaches the child that leaving one's homeland does not mean abandoning identity or the mother tongue to adopt a foreign language. Language serves as a vessel for folk experiences, traditions, and beliefs passed down across generations.

When we consider language in its temporal dimensions, two key traits emerge: historical continuity and synchronous continuity. The latter ensures that collective aspects of identity are internalized through shared language. Arabic, in particular, serves as a unifying identity, transcending regional or ethnic particularities while supporting daily communication and maintaining its formal roles in media, education, and administration. Thus, if a Moroccan, Kuwaiti, or Egyptian is asked which language they speak, they will confidently answer Arabic, recognizing this as a higher linguistic ideal and shared cultural bond.

Through repeating this rhyme, the child internalizes Arab identity, becomes aware of their language,(Muhammad .2016) and develops a sense of cultural belonging. This aligns with the view of the late Abdelhamid Ben Badis, who asserted that: "When a child enters the field of life and encounters those who share his past, present, and future, and sees in them his image in language, feelings, ethics, and tendencies, he develops love for them similar to the affection felt toward his family in childhood. These are the people of the greater homeland, and love for them, according to general custom, constitutes patriotism. From patriotism, identity is shaped."

C. Shared Destiny:

The shared destiny of the community is one of the most fundamental pillars of identity, as it conveys the notion of collective benefit or harm. Children's rhymes, like other forms of popular heritage, record historical events. What distinguishes them, however, is that their discourse is directed at the child, making them an effective tool to transmit and consolidate identity awareness in the child's mind the child being the foundational unit in socialization.

Consider the following rhyme:

"We wore naval uniforms and boarded the boat, and boarded the boat hey!

The boat rises and falls, it does not know how to swim, it does not know how to swim hey!

And the fish rises and falls, it knows how to swim, it knows how to swim hey!

Oh France, you deceiver, you took the youths, you took the youths hey!

You left the liver roasted and the tears in the valleys, the tears in the valleys hey!

We climbed the mountain, coco, and found the soldiers crying, we found the soldiers crying.

We asked them, 'What's wrong?' They said: 'Algeria has returned to you.'"

Despite its simple colloquial language, this rhyme narrates a period of the country's history. France entered Algeria through deceit (France the deceiver), exploiting the destruction of its naval fleet at the Battle of Navarino. It killed, displaced, and left many orphans and widows (liver roasted, tears in the valleys). The colonizer then

occupied Algeria for over 130 years, attempting to erase its national identity. This, in turn, fueled resistance, with youths ascending the mountains to join the liberation struggle, ultimately achieving independence (we found the soldiers crying... Algeria has returned to you).

Children's rhymes thus serve as a conduit to familiarize the child with critical historical events, linking them to their community's shared fate. This builds collective consciousness, allowing the child to understand the historical bond uniting them with their nation and reinforcing a sense of belonging and identity.

D. Customs and Traditions:

Customs and traditions have a profound impact on the strength and continuity of society and constitute a core element of identity. "Every society produces a system of beliefs and values that meets its needs and aligns with its social structure."

(Nabil . 2001. pp. 446–447)The values embraced by a community frame its uniqueness. Customs and beliefs manifest as daily behaviors practiced by individuals, groups, and society at large. Children's rhymes serve as repositories for these practices, preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge.

For example, in the following rhyme, aspects of the Jelfawi (from Djelfa) community and broader Algerian traditions are evident:

"Sharshab, oh snake,
Go to my mother, my aunt,
She sends me her Al-Khallala,
Oh mother, she keeps grinding,
Oh mother, she kneaded the bread,
Oh mother, who eats it?
The shepherds of goodness eat it."

- ❖ Sharshab: drinking water and letting it flow along the sides of the mouth.
- ❖ Al-Khallala: a tool resembling a comb used in weaving to beat wool threads tightly together.

Here, the spindle (kelala) symbolizes the local practice of weaving, traditionally using wool threads to make rugs (kessa, zarbiya), blankets (hawli), or clothing (Al-

Qashabiya). The rhyme also references women's traditional activity of grinding and kneading wheat to bake fresh bread (matlou). Alongside weaving and milling, the rhyme

highlights generosity, as the bread is shared with passing travelers (the shepherds of goodness).

- ❖ Al-Kisa and Al-Zarbiya: carpets made from colored wool.
- ❖ Al-Hawli: a cover made from white wool.
- ❖ Al-Qashabiya: traditional clothing made from wool or hair.

In another example, traditional foods are evoked:

"Nanni nanni, little one,
What shall we make for dinner?
We make jari with dabsha
Or Na'ima with lamb stomach,
And then my child comes to eat."

- ❖ Jari -Dabsha: preparing a soup with coriander.
- ❖ Na'ima: couscous
- ❖ Al-'Usban: a traditional dish made from sheep intestines, cut and seasoned, stuffed in the stomach (tripe), sewn, and cooked in broth with chickpeas.

Couscous is among the most popular dishes in Algeria generally, and in Djelfa specifically, often served with grilled meat, considered a feast delicacy. Soup (jari), typically made from coarse wheat flour, is also a traditional dish, especially during Ramadan, and is referenced in children's rhymes:

"Ramadan came, hey hey hey soup and Usban , hey hey hey"

Customs related to festivals are similarly transmitted. Children eagerly anticipate Eid, reflected in rhymes celebrating new clothing and festive joy:

"And Eid came, hey hey hey clothes and shoes, hey hey hey"

From these examples, the crucial role of customs and traditions in shaping identity becomes clear. Practices shared by the community, encompassing dress, food, and rituals, act as a common bond among its members. Children's rhymes play a

pivotal role in linking the child to these practices, embedding them as everyday life experiences, which fosters a sense of belonging and helps define their identity.

Conclusion

Children's rhymes, as a form of popular literary production transmitted across generations, carry essential elements that make them a rich record, conveying values and characteristics that preserve identity and strengthen belonging. They begin with religion, reflecting the folk understanding of the centrality of faith in individual life. Children's rhymes emphasize religion, particularly the importance of prayer as its pillar, and through simple words, they cultivate affection and attachment to it from an early age.

Language, as the mirror of a people and a marker of their distinctiveness, also plays a crucial role in children's rhymes, linking individuals together and fostering a sense of collective consciousness and national belonging. Thus, religion and language are consistently present in children's rhymes as key components shaping identity.

In addition to religion and language, other dimensions such as shared destiny, customs, and traditions related to food, drink, clothing, and social norms are essential elements that constitute identity. Transmitted children's rhymes, imbued with these values, embed them in the collective unconscious of the nation, and particularly in the child, establishing a unified collective identity. Through this, each individual feels belonging to the community, defends it, and works toward its welfare. In this way, children's rhymes act as a cultural safeguard, countering the identity alienating pressures of globalization, which targets children as a vulnerable group that can easily be influenced.

References

Arabic Sources:

1. Ahmed Ali Mursi, *Al Adab Al Sha'bi wa Funoonuh*, Maktabat Al Shabab, General Egyptian Book Organization, Ministry of Popular Culture, undated.

2. Ishrah Ibrahim Al Musharrafi, Adab Al Atfal: Madkhal li Al Tarbiyah Al Ibda'iyah, Hoor Foundation, Alexandria, Egypt, 1st ed., 2005.
3. Ben Salama, Al Rubai, Min Adab Al Atfal fi Al Jazair wa Al 'Alam Al 'Arabi, Constantine, Dar Madad, 1st ed., 2009.
4. Jaafar, Abdul Razzaq, Adab Al Atfal, Union of Arab Writers, Damascus, 1979.
5. Al Hila Muhammad, Al Al'ab Al Tarbawiya wa Taqaniyat Intajha: Siqoolojiyan wa Ta'limiyan wa 'Amaliyan, Dar Al Maysara, Amman, Jordan, 2003, p. 223.
6. Abdul Ameer Jaafar, Al Fann Al Ghina'i fi Al Khaleej Al Arabi, Ministry of Culture, Media and National Guidance, Dar Al Jahiz, Baghdad, 1st ed., 1980.
7. Abdul Hakim Al Zubaidi, Al Ahazeeg Al Sha'biyya fi Al Khaleej wa Al Jazeera Al Arabiya, Shams Publishing, Cairo, 1st ed., 2019.
8. Fawzi Al 'Antil, Bayn Al Folklor wa Al Thaqafa Al Sha'biyya, Egyptian Book Organization, Cairo, undated, p. 1821.
9. Said Muhammad Al Raqib, Al Huwiyya Al Thaqafiyya fi Al Fikr Al Tarbawi Al Mu'asir wa Tahaddiyat Al Mustaqbal, Dar Yafa, Jordan, 1st ed., 2009.

Foreign Sources:

10. Théophile Gautier, Loin de Paris, Michel Lévy Frères, La Librairie Nouvelle, 1865.

Journals and Periodicals:

11. Jamil Saliba, Ta'rib Al Ta'lim bayn Al Qa'ilin bihi wa Al Mu'aridin lahu, Al Arabi Journal, No. 182, January 1974.
12. Nabil Ali, Manzumat Al Qiyam wa Al Mu'taqadat, Alam Al Ma'rifa Series, No. 265, National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters, Kuwait, January 2001.

Theses and Dissertations:

13. Ahmed Mahmoud Juma'a, Al Qurban fi Al Shi'r Al Jahili, supervised by Dr.

Ihsan Al Deek, Master's Thesis, Graduate School, An Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine, 2018.

Web Sources:

14. Muhammad Nafi' Al 'Ashiri, The Role of Arabic Language in Consolidating National Identities, Balagh website, 03 05 2016

<https://www.balagh.com/article/%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%A9%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AE%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9>