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Tamazight language and collective memory: orality, literature, and intangible heritage.

اللغة الأمازيغية والذاكرة الجماعية: الشفوية والأدب والتراث غير المادي.

Djelloudi Liza
Université de Bouira (Algérie)
l.djelloudi@univ-bouira.dz
** ORCID iD : 0009-0000-9245-4111*

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- **Abstract :**

The Amazigh language is a key element of collective memory in Algeria, mainly through its oral traditions. For a long time, knowledge, values, beliefs, and history were transmitted orally through folktales, songs, poetry, proverbs, and myths. These forms helped preserve a living cultural memory across generations. With the development of written Amazigh literature and its official recognition, this memory has become more fixed and widely shared, while also being reinterpreted. Contemporary Amazigh literature plays an important role in valuing intangible cultural heritage and expressing identity in new ways. However, globalization, social change, and the dominance of other languages create challenges for passing this heritage to younger generations. This study explores the link between the Amazigh language, collective memory, and intangible heritage, focusing on the shift from oral to written traditions and the challenges of preservation in modern Algeria.

Keywords : Amazigh language, collective memory, orality, Amazigh literature, intangible cultural heritage, cultural identity.

الملخص:

تُعدّ اللغة الأمازيغية عنصرًا أساسيًا في الذاكرة الجماعية في الجزائر، وذلك خاصة من خلال تقاليدها الشفوية. فلفترة طويلة، كان نقل المعارف والقيم والمعتقدات والتاريخ يتم شفهيًا عبر الحكايات الشعبية، والأغاني، والشعر، والأمثال، والأساطير. وقد ساهمت هذه الأشكال في الحفاظ على ذاكرة ثقافية حيّة عبر الأجيال. ومع تطور الأدب الأمازيغي المكتوب والاعتراف الرسمي به، أصبحت هذه الذاكرة أكثر تثبيتًا وانتشارًا، مع إعادة تفسيرها في الوقت نفسه. يلعب الأدب الأمازيغي المعاصر دورًا مهمًا في تثمين التراث الثقافي غير المادي والتعبير عن الهوية بطرق جديدة. غير أن العولمة، والتغيرات الاجتماعية، وهيمنة لغات أخرى تفرض تحديات على نقل هذا التراث إلى الأجيال الشابة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف العلاقة بين اللغة الأمازيغية والذاكرة الجماعية والتراث غير المادي، مع التركيز على الانتقال من الشفهي إلى المكتوب والتحديات المرتبطة بالحفاظ عليه في الجزائر الحديثة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الأمازيغية، الذاكرة الجماعية، الشفاهية، الأدب الأمازيغي، التراث الثقافي غير المادي، الهوية الثقافية.

L'introduction doit couvrir une préface appropriée au sujet (tenir à l'écart des idées générales déjà connues), puis clarifier l'importance de la recherche et ses objectifs, soulevant le problème et la

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Collective memory constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of the identity of human societies. The sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1950) argues that memory is never solely an individual phenomenon; rather, it is constructed within social groups through shared symbolic, cultural, and linguistic frameworks. Language plays a decisive role in this process, as it serves simultaneously as a medium, a vehicle, and a space for the actualization of memory.

In Algeria, the Amazigh language represents a major vector of collective memory. Bearing a history that spans several millennia and deeply rooted in North Africa, it has long been transmitted primarily through oral tradition. This oral transmission has ensured the continuity of knowledge, values, and representations specific to Amazigh communities in Kabylia, the Aurès, the Mzab, and the Hoggar.

The constitutional recognition of Tamazight as a national language in 2002 and later as an official language in 2016 marks a decisive turning point. However, this institutionalization raises new questions: how can a historically oral memory be preserved in a globalized world? How can folklorization be avoided while ensuring effective transmission?

This study aims to analyze the close relationship between the Amazigh language and collective memory through three main dimensions: orality, the emergence of written literature, and the issue of intangible cultural heritage.

1. Collective Memory and Language: Theoretical Frameworks

According to Maurice Halbwachs, collective memory is structured by "social frameworks[1]" that shape the way a group remembers the past. Language constitutes one of these fundamental frameworks, as it organizes categories of thought and establishes shared symbolic references.

From the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu (1982), language is also a form of symbolic capital. It plays a role in power relations and social hierarchies. Thus, in a context of historical marginalization, the Amazigh language has functioned as a space of cultural resistance and a means of preserving collective memory.

Amazigh memory has been constructed within a context of successive linguistic domination (ancient, Ottoman, colonial, and postcolonial periods). This situation has reinforced the importance of orality as the primary mode of transmission.

2. Amazigh Orality: A Living Memory

[1] "If, by historical memory, we mean the sequence of events of which national history preserves the memory, it is not this, nor are its frameworks, that represent the essence of what we call collective memory". Original: « Si, par mémoire historique, on entend la suite des événements dont l'histoire nationale conserve le souvenir, ce n'est pas elle, ce ne sont pas ses cadres qui représentent l'essentiel de ce que nous appelons la mémoire collective.» (Halbwachs Maurice- La mémoire collective- article en ligne- 1950- p.23.)

Orality[2] constitutes the fundamental foundation of Amazigh collective memory. For centuries, in the absence of written institutionalization and within contexts often marked by linguistic marginalization, the transmission of knowledge, history, and values has occurred primarily through speech. This speech is not merely a means of communication; it is a space for the preservation, recreation, and continuous renewal of collective memory.

In Amazigh societies, memory is not preserved in material archives but in narratives, songs, proverbs, and ritual performances. It is embodied by specific social figures: storytellers, poets, singers, and women as guardians of domestic and ritual traditions. Thus, orality represents a fully structured cultural system. In this regard, "Amazigh oral literature represents an invaluable linguistic treasure. It constitutes not only a cultural heritage but also a living corpus, rich in forms of expression, ancient vocabulary, and specific grammatical structures. Transmitted orally by elders, carried by the voices of women and men during evening gatherings, agricultural work, or festive events, this literature conveys knowledge, values, and a worldview deeply rooted in the lived experience of Amazigh-speaking communities."[3] (Rahmani Atmane et al-Transmission et valorisation de la langue amazighe à travers la littérature orale et écrite- Ziglôbitha-2025-p. 353.)

2.1 Tales and Mythical Narratives: Transmission of Norms and Imaginaries

Timucuha (traditional tales) occupy a central place in intergenerational transmission. Told during family evening gatherings, particularly during long winter nights, they constitute a privileged space for social learning. These "traditional tales (*timucuha*), often narrated by elderly people, make use of an expressive, poetic, and highly metaphorical language. These narratives employ comparisons drawn from the natural world (animals, seasons, mountains, celestial bodies) and rely on repetitive narrative structures that facilitate memorization and oral transmission."[4] (Rahmani Atmane et al-Transmission et valorisation de la langue amazighe à travers la littérature orale et écrite- Ziglôbitha-2025-p. 353.) The figure of *Teryel*, a mythical ogress, perfectly illustrates this educational function in traditional narratives. Through these stories, children learn to be cautious in the face of the

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[2] "From the earliest times up to the mid-20th century, Kabyle literature was mainly oral and expressed primarily through poetry. While it is also true that other genres such as folktales, fables, legends, and various mythical narratives were other means through which the Kabyle people expressed their culture and imagination, it was undoubtedly poetry that served as the privileged form of expression for their passion and creative genius. Indeed, whereas other peoples carved their glory in stone or recorded their history in books, the Kabyles entrusted their memory to their poetry". Original: « Depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'au milieu du XXe siècle, la littérature kabyle fut principalement orale et s'exprimait essentiellement dans le genre poétique. S'il est vrai aussi que d'autres genres comme le conte, la fable, la légende et autres récits mythiques furent d'autres moyens par lesquels les Kabyles exprimèrent leur culture et leur imaginaire, c'est sans aucun doute la poésie qui fut le mode d'expression privilégié de leur passion et de leur génie. Là où, en effet, d'autres peuples avaient gravé dans le marbre leur gloire ou couché dans des livres leur histoire, c'est assurément à leur poésie que les Kabyles ont confié leur mémoire.» (Lahlou Abdelhak- Poésie orale kabyle ancienne : histoire, mémoire et patrimoine-Quaderns de la Mediterrània-2018-p. 107.)

[3] Original : « La littérature orale amazighe représente un trésor linguistique inestimable. Elle constitue non seulement un patrimoine culturel, mais aussi un corpus vivant, riche en formes d'expression, en lexique ancien et en structures grammaticales spécifiques. Transmise à l'oral par les anciens, portée par la voix des femmes et des hommes dans les veillées, les travaux agricoles ou les rassemblements festifs, cette littérature véhicule des savoirs, des valeurs et une vision du monde profondément enracinée dans le vécu des communautés amazighophones.» (Rahmani Atmane et al- Transmission et valorisation de la langue amazighe à travers la littérature orale et écrite- Ziglôbitha-2025-p. 353.)

[4] Original : « contes traditionnels (*timucuha*), souvent racontés par des personnes âgées, font appel à une langue imagée, poétique et fortement métaphorique. Ces récits utilisent des comparaisons tirées du monde naturel (animaux, saisons, montagnes, astres) et reposent sur des structures narratives répétitives qui facilitent la mémorisation et la transmission orale.» (Rahmani Atmane et al- Transmission et valorisation de la langue amazighe à travers la littérature orale et écrite- Ziglôbitha-2025-p. 353.)

unknown, to respect prohibitions, and to understand the importance of intelligence and cunning in overcoming dangers.

These tales are never mere entertainment; they structure the collective imagination through memory. In this sense, the tale "owes its survival to orality, since memory lies at the origin of its mode of transmission."[5] (Belhadi Rachid- Le récit contique amazighe : passage de l'oral à l'écrit-Revue des Études Amazighes-2024-p. 02.) They convey cultural archetypes (the protective mother, the cunning hero, the united community) and allow the child to integrate into a shared symbolic universe, thus ensuring cultural continuity. Beyond their moral dimension, these narratives sometimes include cosmogonic elements explaining the origin of the world, the seasons, or social practices. They form a mythical memory that gives meaning to the present.

2.2 Poetry and Songs: Emotional and Identity-Based Memory

Amazigh oral poetry[6] occupies a central place in identity construction. As noted, "the claim for Berber language and culture has long been expressed through song.[7]"[8] (Tabti-Kouidri Fatiha-Identité et altérité dans la chanson kabyle engagée des années 1990 : Idir, Lounès Matoub-Insaniyat-2011- p. 130). It manifests itself through various forms of expression, including work songs, wedding songs, funeral elegies, as well as engaged poetry, each reflecting essential aspects of the social, cultural, and emotional life of the community.

In Kabylia, the tradition of *imedyazen* (itinerant poets) illustrates this memorial function. The poet acts simultaneously as a social chronicler, mediator, and spokesperson for the community. In contemporary times, artists such as Lounis Aït Menguellet and Matoub Lounès have extended this oral tradition within a modern musical framework. Their songs address profound themes such as exile and migration, loss and nostalgia, identity claims, as well as the memory of political and cultural struggles.

Their works thus become genuine sound archives, embedding contemporary concerns within the continuity of an ancient tradition. Modern Amazigh song therefore illustrates the transition from traditional orality to mediated orality, disseminated through radio, cassette recordings, and, more recently, digital platforms.

2.3 Historical Memory: Orality and Resistance

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[5] Original : « Doit sa survie à son oralité puisque la mémoire est à l'origine de son mode de transmission » (Belhadi Rachid- Le récit contique amazighe : passage de l'oral à l'écrit-Revue des Études Amazighes-2024-p. 02.)

[6] "Poetry plays a political and ideological role within the social sphere, shaping the group's collective imagination and responding to its socio-political needs. In this sense, it works to reinforce its values, contributes to the education of children, and helps preserve and record significant historical events". Original : « La poésie joue dans l'espace social un rôle politique et idéologique qui structure l'imaginaire du groupe et qui répond à ses besoins socio-politiques. Pour cet effet, elle travaille à consolider ses valeurs, participe à l'éducation des enfants et à fixer les événements historiques marquants.» (Lahlou Abdelhak-Poésie orale kabyle ancienne : histoire, mémoire et patrimoine-Quaderns de la Mediterrània-2018-p. 109-110.)

[7] "The impact and significance of Kabyle song lie in the language it spreads, shapes, and perpetuates: Tamazight. Every step forward in the development of the song is also a step forward for the language". Original : « L'impact et la signification de la chanson kabyle sont celles de la langue qu'elle diffuse, travaille et perpétue : tamazight. Tout progrès de la chanson est un pas en avant de la langue.» (Cherbi, Moh & Khouas, Arezki-Chanson kabyle et identité berbère : l'œuvre de Lounis Aït Menguellet-EDIF-Paris-2001. P. 50.)

[8] Original : « La revendication de la langue et de la culture berbères s'est longtemps exprimée par le chant.»[8] (Tabti-Kouidri Fatiha-Identité et altérité dans la chanson kabyle engagée des années 1990 : Idir, Lounès Matoub-Insaniyat-2011- p. 130.)

Amazigh orality also plays a fundamental role in preserving historical memory, particularly during periods of conflict and resistance[9].

In the Aurès region, songs that evoke the figure of Lalla Fatma N'Soumer[10] help keep alive the memory of resistance against French colonial rule. Similarly, many popular narratives recount local struggles, uprisings, and regional heroic figures. These oral traditions should be considered as historical sources in their own right. The historian Jan Vansina (1985) demonstrated that oral traditions, when analyzed within their sociocultural context and compared with other sources, constitute legitimate historical material. They provide access to a form of "history from below," reflecting the perspectives of local communities that are often absent from official archives.

In this sense, orality becomes a space of symbolic resistance, preserving a community-based version of history in the face of dominant narratives.

2.4 The Performative Dimension: A Living and Evolving Memory

One of the defining features of Amazigh orality lies in its performative nature. Each narrative is not simply repeated mechanically; rather, it is reinterpreted depending on the context, the audience, and the social situation. The storyteller adapts the narrative to the listeners' level of understanding, to contemporary events, and to the social tensions of the moment. This flexibility allows collective memory to be both stable and dynamic. While it preserves its fundamental structures, it also incorporates new elements. In this way, memory is not fixed; it is alive, evolving, and constantly renewed.

2.5 Social Spaces of Orality

Amazigh orality is rooted in specific social spaces where the transmission of knowledge and traditions occurs naturally. The family home is one of the primary settings for this transmission, where elders share stories, tales, and proverbs with younger generations, conveying collective memory in an informal yet meaningful way.

The village square also plays a central role as a space for exchange and communication. It is in these public settings that conversations, storytelling, and recitations take place, helping to keep oral traditions alive within the community. Orality is also expressed during collective ceremonies and seasonal celebrations such as Yennayer, which bring community members together through songs, poetry, and traditional narratives. These spaces and moments function as true sites of memory socialization, fostering community cohesion and strengthening the sense of cultural belonging.

3. From Orality to Writing: The Emergence of Amazigh Literature

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[9] We have several among them : Amrouche Taos. 1966, « *Le Grain magique : contes, proverbes et poésies berbères de Kabylie*. » Paris : Maspero. This work brings together tales and songs from the Kabyle oral tradition and shows how orality transmits collective memory, social values, and historical events. The stories and popular songs thus serve as a means of preserving Amazigh history and identity within communities. And Mammeri Mouloud. *Poèmes kabyles anciens*. Paris : Maspero, 1980. In this fundamental work on traditional Kabyle poetry, Mammeri shows that poems and songs serve as archives of collective memory. They often evoke historical events, tribal conflicts, or resistance against political domination. Thus Bourdieu Pierre. *Sociologie de l'Algérie*. Paris : PUF, 1958. Bourdieu emphasizes that oral traditions in Berber societies play an essential role in transmitting local history and social values, particularly through songs and folk tales.

[10] Kabyle folk songs often evoke the figure of Lalla Fatma N'Soumer, a Kabyle resistance fighter who led battles against the French colonial army in the 1850s.

In contemporary studies of cultures and intangible heritage, the recognition of oral productions has become a central concern. For a long time, oral traditions were considered secondary compared to written ones. Today, however, they are gaining increasing attention in the humanities and social sciences, particularly in anthropology, ethnology, and comparative literature. Scholars now emphasize the importance of approaching these two modes of cultural transmission as complementary, acknowledging their respective roles in the construction and transmission of knowledge.

In this context, Lahoucine Bouyaakoubi highlights: "*In order to place humanity's oral production on the same level as its written production, informed researchers use two expressions: 'oral literature' and 'written literature.' Both are presented as texts—one 'oral' and the other 'written.' They have even coined the term 'orature,' modeled on 'writing,' to refer to these two distinct yet harmonious modes of cultural and social production*."[11] (Bouyaakoubi, Lahoucine-Oralité et écriture dans la néo-amazighe au Maroc-Langues, Cultures, Communication-2017. p. 74.)

The transition to writing represents a major transformation. Long limited by the lack of institutional recognition, Amazigh literature began to develop more visibly during the 20th century. The work of Mouloud Mammeri played a foundational role: his efforts to collect and transcribe ancient Kabyle poetry helped preserve a memory that had previously been almost entirely oral. In addition, writers such as Tahar Djaout[12] and Assia Djebar[13] demonstrated how writing can serve as a means of reclaiming memory, even when expressed in French. The use of Tifinagh, the ancestral Amazigh alphabet now standardized, also contributes to this process of identity reaffirmation. It provides symbolic visibility in the public sphere, including signage, media, and educational materials. However, contemporary Amazigh literature goes beyond simply transcribing oral traditions. It introduces modern narrative forms and explores themes such as exile, traumatic memory, and social transformation.

4. Amazigh Language and Intangible Cultural Heritage

According to the definition adopted by UNESCO in the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, intangible cultural heritage encompasses all practices, representations, expressions, and know-how transmitted from generation to generation within communities. It constitutes a living memory that reflects the cultural identity and traditions of a people.

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[11] Original : « Pour mettre la production orale de l'humanité au même titre que sa production écrite, les chercheurs avisés utilisent deux expressions : « littérature orale » et « littérature écrite » ; les deux se présentent aussi comme des textes, l'un « oral » et l'autre « écrit ». Ils ont même forgé le terme « orature » sur le modèle d'« écriture » pour renvoyer aux deux modes de production culturelle et sociale différents certes, mais en harmonie.» (Bouyaakoubi, Lahoucine-Oralité et écriture dans la néo-amazighe au Maroc-Langues, Cultures, Communication-2017. P. 74.)

[12] Djaout Tahar. 1984, « Les Chercheurs d'os ». Paris, Éditions du Seuil. / Djaout Tahar.1987, « L'Invention du désert ». Paris, Éditions du Seuil. / Djaout Tahar. 1991, « Les Vigiles ». Paris, Éditions du Seuil. / Djaout Tahar. 1999, « Le Dernier été de la raison ». Paris, Éditions du Seuil (publication posthume).

[13] Djebar Assia. 1985, « L'Amour, la fantasia ». Paris, Éditions Jean-Claude Lattès. / Djebar Assia. 1980, « Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement », Paris, Des Femmes. / Djebar, Assia. 1995, « Vaste est la prison », Paris, Albin Michel. / Djebar, Assia, 1991, «Loin de Médine », Paris, Albin Michel.

Within this framework, the Amazigh language occupies a central position, as it is closely linked to a wide range of cultural and social practices. It accompanies seasonal rituals such as Yennayer, wedding songs, artisanal skills, and traditional agricultural practices. Through these expressions, the language serves as a vehicle for transmitting values, symbols, and knowledge inherited from the past.

However, without the language, these practices risk losing an essential part of their symbolic and cultural meaning. The process of safeguarding and promoting this heritage must therefore be accompanied by the active and everyday use of the Amazigh language. This can be achieved through its integration into formal education, its presence in audiovisual media, and its development across digital platforms, in order to ensure its transmission and vitality among younger generations.

According to UNESCO's 2003 Convention, intangible cultural heritage includes "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills as well as the instruments, objects and cultural spaces associated with them that communities recognize as part of their cultural heritage." In this context, the Amazigh language is not merely a means of communication; it is the fundamental vehicle for transmitting Amazigh intangible cultural heritage. It structures rituals, narratives, songs, artisanal techniques, and agricultural knowledge. Without it, these elements risk losing their symbolic depth and cultural coherence.

4.1. Seasonal Rituals: The Example of Yennayer[14]

Among the most significant seasonal rituals in Amazigh culture is Yennayer, the Amazigh New Year, celebrated on January 12 in several regions of North Africa. "Yennayer is a celebration shared by Algerian society and by all the peoples of North Africa, and even the Mediterranean basin. Today, it is experiencing a revival in vitality, along with an evolution in its meaning and scope. While its essence remains deeply rooted, certain variations exist, particularly in its designation, which differs from one region to another depending on geographical features, climate, and population composition (Nayer, Yennayer, or Amenzou n'Yennayer)."[15] (Hocine Fadila & Rahal Safia-

[14] "Since more than forty years, Algeria has been reclaiming its language, culture, traditions, and identity. In other words, it is reconciling itself with its memory and history. The year 2018 marks the first celebration of Yennayer as a paid public holiday, starting from January 12, 2018, alongside the first day of the Hijri year and the Christian New Year. On December 27, 2017, a decree was issued to this effect following a Council of Ministers meeting. This day was officially added to the list of legal holidays. Law No. 18-12 of July 2, 2018, amending and supplementing Law No. 63-278 of July 26, 1963, establishing the list of legal holidays, was finally published in the Official Journal in August 2018." Original : « Depuis plus de quarante ans, l'Algérie se réapproprie sa langue, sa culture, ses traditions et son identité. En d'autres termes, elle se réconcilie avec sa mémoire et son histoire. L'année 2018 marque la première célébration de Yennayer en tant que jour férié et payé, à partir du 12 janvier 2018, à l'instar du premier jour de l'an hégirien et du Nouvel An chrétien. Le 27 décembre 2017, un décret a été promulgué à cet effet à l'issue d'un Conseil des ministres. Cette journée a été officiellement intégrée dans la liste des fêtes légales. La loi n°18-12 du 2 juillet 2018, modifiant et complétant la loi n°63 278 du 26 juillet 1963, fixant la liste des fêtes légales, a finalement été publiée au Journal officiel en août 2018. » (Hocine Fadila & Rahal Safia-Représentations sociales de Yennayer chez les enseignants universitaires algériens : entre pratiques rituelles, mémoire culturelle et identité amazighe-Aleph-2025- p.247.)

[15] Original : « Yennayer est une fête commune à toute la société algérienne et à tous les peuples d'Afrique du Nord, voire du bassin méditerranéen. Elle connaît aujourd'hui un regain de vitalité ainsi qu'une évolution dans sa signification et sa portée. La célébration de Yennayer, bien enracinée, est restée la même dans son essence, avec toutefois quelques particularités. Celles-ci se manifestent également dans la désignation qui varie d'une région à l'autre, en fonction du relief géographique, du climat et de la composition humaine (nayer, yennayer ou encore amenzou n'yennayer).» (Hocine Fadila & Rahal Safia-Représentations

Représentations sociales de Yennayer chez les enseignants universitaires algériens : entre pratiques rituelles, mémoire culturelle et identité amazighe-Aleph-2025- p.247.)

This celebration symbolically marks the beginning of the agricultural year[16] and represents an important moment of family and community gathering. In many regions, families prepare a ritual meal for the occasion, often consisting of couscous or dishes made from cereals. During these celebrations, blessings are pronounced in the Amazigh language. These expressions generally invoke agricultural prosperity, the fertility of the land, and protection against poor harvests in the coming year. These ritual utterances carry strong symbolic and cultural value. When translated into another language, they often lose part of their richness, particularly wordplay related to the land, local mythological references, and poetic nuances specific to the Amazigh language. Thus, language is not a secondary element; it lies at the very heart of the meaning and transmission of the ritual.

4.2. Wedding Songs and Oral Poetry[17]

Amazigh weddings represent important moments of cultural expression, marked by the performance of traditional songs often sung by women or by specialized groups. Among these songs are the *izlan*[18], nuptial chants that accompany different stages of the ceremony and contribute to the transmission of social and family values. These songs usually contain advice addressed to the bride for her new life, praises of the family, as well as metaphors evoking beauty and honour. In the Amazigh language, they are characterized by the use of imagery strongly connected to nature, such as the mountain, the spring, or the argan tree, along with specific rhythms and idiomatic expressions that are difficult to translate literally.

When these songs are preserved only in translation, they risk losing much of their cultural richness. They become mere folkloric texts, detached from their musicality, poetic imagery, and emotional

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sociales de Yennayer chez les enseignants universitaires algériens : entre pratiques rituelles, mémoire culturelle et identité amazighe-Aleph-2025- p.247.)

[16] "In the Maghreb, the agricultural calendar, based on the seasons and the position of the stars, has always been used to guide farming activities. These Amazigh traditions are sometimes seen as superstition, but they contribute to the socialization of individuals while also strengthening the sociocultural fabric." Original : « Au Maghreb, le calendrier agraire, fondé sur les saisons et la position des astres, a toujours été utilisé pour les travaux agricoles. Ces traditions amazighes s'apparentent parfois à de la superstition, mais elles participent à la socialisation des individus, tout en renforçant le tissu socioculturel.» (Hocine Fadila & Rahal Safia-Représentations sociales de Yennayer chez les enseignants universitaires algériens : entre pratiques rituelles, mémoire culturelle et identité amazighe-Aleph-2025- p.248.)

[17] "Today, we are fortunate to possess an important corpus of ancient poetry, a thesaurus, collected by Hanoteau (1867), Boulifa (1904), Amrouche (1939), Ouary (1972), Yacine (1988), and the considerable body of work gathered by Mouloud Mammeri (1969, 1980, 1988), which makes it possible to encompass more than three centuries of Kabyle oral poetry, offering a privileged field of observation on traditions, customs, and the elements of a centuries-old culture." Original : « Nous avons aujourd'hui la chance de posséder un important corpus de poésies anciennes, un thésaurus, recueilli par Hanoteau (1867), Boulifa (1904), Amrouche (1939), Ouary (1972), Yacine (1988) et la somme considérable recueillie par Mammeri (1969, 1980, 1988), qui permet d'embrasser plus de trois siècles de poésie orale Kabyle offrant un champ d'observation privilégié sur les traditions, les mœurs, et les éléments d'une culture pluriséculaire. » (Lahlou Abdelhak- Poésie orale kabyle ancienne : histoire, mémoire et patrimoine-Quaderns de la Mediterrània-2018-p.107-108.)

[18] "It consists of two (or sometimes four) lines, often featuring internal rhyme or rhyme at the hemistich (half-line) ending, and containing a complete meaning. It is the basic poetic form among the Salem Chaker, and among the *Imaziɣn* of central Morocco, a genre essentially devoted to love casuistry, although there also exist historical and didactic *izlan* (plural of izli)." Original : « Il s'agit de deux (éventuellement quatre) vers comportant souvent une rime interne ou en fin d'hémistiche, et renfermant un sens complet. C'est la forme poétique de base chez les *Imaziɣn* du Maroc central, genre essentiellement consacré à la casuistique amoureuse, bien qu'il existe des *izlan* (pl. d'*izli*) historiques et didactiques. » (M. Peyron, S. Chaker et T. Oudjedi-« Izli »-Edisud, 2003-mis en ligne-2011. P.01.)

depth as expressed in their original language. Thus, the Amazigh language remains essential for preserving the authenticity and symbolic richness of these nuptial songs.

4.3. Craft, Agricultural, and Cultural Knowledge

Amazigh artisanal know-how constitutes a key component of intangible cultural heritage. In many regions of North Africa, traditional crafts such as weaving, pottery, and jewelry-making rely on the oral transmission of technical knowledge. This transmission takes place primarily through the Amazigh language, which provides a specialized vocabulary used to describe materials, tools, and production processes. Learning these crafts therefore goes beyond mastering technical gestures; it also involves acquiring a precise lexicon that allows artisans to understand the stages of production and the cultural meaning of the objects created.

In the field of carpet and textile weaving, each decorative motif generally has a name in Amazigh and carries a specific symbolic meaning. Some motifs are associated with protection against the evil eye, others with fertility, prosperity, or belonging to a family or tribal group. Women practicing this craft not only transmit weaving techniques but also the interpretation of geometric patterns, the origins of motifs, and the rules governing carpet composition. The Amazigh language thus plays a fundamental role in explaining these symbolic elements and in conveying their cultural significance. When this vocabulary disappears or is no longer understood by younger generations, the motifs risk being perceived as mere decorative designs, detached from their symbolic and identity-related meanings.

Traditional agricultural practices also constitute an area in which the Amazigh language preserves and transmits ecological knowledge. In rural societies, Amazigh communities possess a rich vocabulary to describe seasonal cycles, soil types, irrigation techniques, and different varieties of seeds. This lexicon reflects a deep understanding of the local ecosystem and the climatic conditions specific to each region. Some agricultural expressions, for example, help identify the most favorable time for sowing, interpret natural signs indicating rainfall, or describe traditional methods of crop storage. Through these terms and expressions, the language transmits ecological knowledge accumulated over generations. The gradual disappearance of the language may therefore lead to the loss of an important part of this environmental knowledge.

Intergenerational transmission is a central element in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. In oral societies, tales, proverbs, songs, and ritual practices are passed down from generation to generation through the everyday use of language. When the Amazigh language is no longer used in family and community life, this transmission becomes more fragile. Younger generations may then struggle to understand proverbs, interpret traditional narratives, or grasp the deeper meaning of certain rituals. Cultural practices risk gradually becoming symbolic performances, stripped of the richness of their original significance.

In this context, safeguarding intangible cultural heritage cannot be limited to institutional measures or the inscription of cultural elements on heritage lists. Effective protection also requires maintaining the living use of the Amazigh language in different areas of social life. The language is, in fact, the primary vehicle for transmitting knowledge, representations, and cultural values. Without its active use, cultural practices risk losing their historical depth and symbolic dimension.

Several initiatives can contribute to strengthening the vitality of the Amazigh language and preserving the associated intangible heritage. Education plays a key role in this process, particularly through the integration of Amazigh into school curricula, the training of specialized teachers, and the production of appropriate educational materials. Audiovisual media can also support this dynamic by offering programs in Amazigh, documentaries on local traditions, and children's shows to encourage early language acquisition.

Digital technologies, moreover, open new opportunities for the promotion and dissemination of this linguistic and cultural heritage. The creation of digital content in Amazigh such as podcasts, educational videos, or digitized oral archives can reach a wider audience and enhance the visibility of the language in the public space. These tools also help preserve tales, songs, and testimonies that form an essential part of collective memory.

4.4. Contemporary Challenges and Perspectives

Despite institutional progress and the official recognition of the Amazigh language in some North African countries, several challenges remain. Dialectal diversity, which includes Kabyle, Chaoui, Mozabite, and Tuareg varieties, raises questions related to linguistic standardization and the development of common norms for teaching and language dissemination. Furthermore, social transformations and urbanization may weaken intergenerational transmission, particularly in urban areas where the everyday use of Amazigh tends to decline in favor of other dominant languages.

Nevertheless, the institutional recognition of the Amazigh language opens new perspectives for the valorization of intangible cultural heritage. It allows for a rethinking of national collective memory in a more inclusive perspective, fully integrating the Amazigh dimension into the understanding of the history and cultural diversity of North African societies. In this regard, the promotion of the Amazigh language is not only a linguistic issue but also a key means of preserving and transmitting a rich and plural cultural heritage.

- ## Conclusion :

The Amazigh language constitutes a central pillar of collective memory in Algeria. Through orality, written literature, and intangible cultural heritage, it ensures the transmission of values, knowledge, and representations that form the basis of Amazigh identity. Its valorization is not merely a linguistic issue but a broader process of cultural and memorial preservation. To preserve the Amazigh language is to preserve a living and dynamic memory, capable of engaging with the transformations of the contemporary world.

This study has demonstrated that the Amazigh language constitutes a fundamental pillar of collective memory in Algeria, functioning as both a medium of transmission and a structuring framework of cultural identity. The analysis has shown that collective memory in Amazigh societies is primarily rooted in orality, which remains the most dynamic and resilient mode of preserving and transmitting knowledge, values, and representations. Oral forms such as tales, poetry, songs, and ritual expressions were identified as essential repositories of memory, ensuring intergenerational continuity and the preservation of a shared symbolic universe.

The study also highlights that the transition from orality to writing does not represent a rupture but rather an extension of memory practices. The emergence of Amazigh written literature has contributed to the stabilization, preservation, and wider dissemination of cultural content, while maintaining strong links with oral traditions. Writing has thus reinforced the visibility of Amazigh memory in institutional, educational, and literary spaces.

Furthermore, the analysis has established that the Amazigh language is inseparable from intangible cultural heritage. Rituals such as Yennayer, traditional wedding songs, artisanal knowledge, and agricultural practices are all deeply embedded in the linguistic system. The results show that the loss or weakening of the language directly affects the transmission of these practices, leading to a reduction in their symbolic and cultural significance. Another important finding is that the Amazigh language has functioned historically as a tool of cultural resistance. In contexts marked by marginalization and linguistic domination, it has enabled the preservation of alternative narratives and a form of "memory from below," rooted in community experience and oral tradition. This resilience explains its persistence and its continued relevance in contemporary society.

At the same time, the study reveals that despite institutional recognition, the vitality of the Amazigh language remains closely linked to its everyday use. Challenges such as urbanization, reduced intergenerational transmission, and linguistic standardization continue to affect its development. However, the integration of Amazigh into education, media, and digital platforms has been identified as a key factor in strengthening its sustainability. In conclusion, the Amazigh language emerges as a living, dynamic, and evolving space of collective memory, where tradition and modernity interact continuously. Its preservation is not only a matter of linguistic policy but a broader process of safeguarding cultural heritage, reinforcing identity, and maintaining the diversity that characterizes Algerian society.

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