Discourse Analysis of Arabic Nursery Rhymes

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Abstract:

Nursery rhyme is a kind of oral literature that is recognized in all languages as one of the most important characteristics of baby talk. The present study investigates nursery rhymes in Arabic from a discoursal point of view. The study aims at making a schematic discoursal analysis of nursery rhymes in Arabic through examining their thematic, linguistic and cultural features. To achieve these aims, the study hypothesizes that(1) religious cultural references are more characteristic of Arabic nursery rhymes, and(2) Arabic nursery rhymes have macrostructural and superstructural organization. Data analysis is conducted on the basis of Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach of discourse analysis. This model consists of the main components of text, namely, Macrostructure (thematic), Superstructure (schematic), Microstructure (linguistic) and Cultural features. The study has revealed the following main findings. First, Arabic rhymes pay more attention to religious themes. Second, typical Arabic nursery rhymes is their schematic structure. They comprise all the conventional categories; introduction, content and closing in the same hierarchical organization. Third, at the microstructural level, Arabic nursery rhymes show differences in their semantic, syntactic, stylistic and rhetorical features. Such differences are represented either in the type of the used elements used or in the frequency of their occurrence. Fourth, Arabic nursery rhymes are characterized by much use of religious references.
Key words: Arabic nursery rhymes, Discourse analysis, Cultural references

تحليل الخطاب في أناشيد الحضانة العربية*

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ملخص البحث:

أناشيد الحضانة هي ضربٌ من ضروب الأدب اللفظي المعترف به في جميع اللغات بوصفه أحد أهم خصائص لغة الأطفال. تبحث الدراسة الحالية في أناشيد الأطفال في اللغة العربية من وجهة نظر خطابية. . وتستهدف أيضًا إجراء تحليل خطابي لبنية أناشيد الحضانة فوق الكبرى في اللغة العربية من خلال تمحيص الخصائص الثيماتية واللغوية والثقافية. لتحقيق هذه الأهداف تفترض الدراسة 1) أن التعبيرات الدينية هي السمة الغالبة في أناشيد الحضانة العربية ، 3) وأن لأناشيد الحضانة العربية بنية كبرى وفوق الكبرى. أذ تم إجراء تحليل البيانات على أساس نموذج فان ديك الاجتماعي الإدراكي لتحليل الخطاب. وهو يشتمل على البنية الثيماتية الكبرى (الموضوعية) ، والبنية فوق الكبرى (البنية الخطابية) ، و البنية الدقيقة (اللغوية) والسمات الثقافية.

كشفت هذه الدراسة عن النتائج الرئيسة التالية:

أولاً: تولي الأناشيد العربية اهتمامًا أكبر بالموضوعات الدينية.

ثانيًا: تعد البنية فوق الكبرى نموذجا للأناشيد العربية . فهي تشمل كل العناصر التقليدية ؛ المقدمة والمحتوى والقفلة وفي نفس التنظيم الهرمي.

ثالثًا: على مستوى البنية الدقيقة ، تظهر أناشيد الحضانة العربية اختلافات في سماتها الدلالية والنحوية والأسلوبية والبلاغية. وتتمثل هذه الاختلافات إما في نوع العناصر المستعملة أو في تكرار حدوثها.

رابعًا:تتميز أناشيد الحضانة العربية بكثرة استعمال التعبيرات الدينية.

1.1 Introduction

One form of entertainment for all people is singing songs, regardless of age, time and location. Nowadays, there are many types of songs such as pop, country, rock, folk, as well as nursery rhymes. As they are produced to serve different purposes, these types of songs have distinct features. For example, folk songs are made for education and entertainment. Moreover, they match ritual acts, arouse the spirit and function as a means to give lessons through reminders as well as sarcasm (Hamid, et. al., 2015). A song is deliberated as a component of literature and is branded under poetry (Sulong and Rahim,2015).

A nursery rhyme is one of the most salient features of baby talk in all languages. It is an effective tool in teaching language at the pre-school stage. During the nursery school level, children learn language through nursery rhymes based on repetition. Children are instinctively attached to nursery rhymes because of its musical and melodious nature that appeals very much to the ears of children. Hence, it is a common practice in probably all languages and cultures that teaching, learning and memorizing are done through nursery rhymes. Moreover, nursery rhymes can be one of the most effective media for children to learn about environment, languages and even cultures. Singing nursery rhymes may help children to recognize their surroundings through short, interesting and entertaining rhyming lyrics.

Generally speaking, nursery rhymes are used as learning materials by which kindergarten teachers incline to conduct singing activities during their lessons. This is considered as one of the well-known activities among the children because it is fun and entertaining

(Liao and Campbell, 2014). Besides their function as a source of entertainment, nursery rhymes can also support the children's development of both linguistic and musical skills. Hence, nursery rhymes are not employed for enjoyment purposes only, but also work as a learning device to assist the children's musical and linguistic development (Liao & Campbell, 2016).

1.2 The problem

Understanding nursery rhymes requires full knowledge of the language in which it is written, and knowing a language requires knowing its linguistic and cultural aspects. Unawareness of such aspects may lead to failure in comprehending the discoursal values of the nursery rhyme. Children's songs and nursery rhymes have been the subjects of many studies all over the world, but Arabic nursery rhymes have not been given enough consideration yet. Therefore, this study comes as an attempt to disclose the discoursal features of Arabic nursery rhymes and fill the existing research gap.

1.3 Nursery Rhymes

Nursery rhyme has been identified by many scholars and represented differently. For example, Dodson (1981, p. 37) characterized nursery rhymes as "music sentences" and argued that rhythm and rhymes are so appealing to many children to help them improve their listening. They can also be known as children rhymes as they area type of literature that combines both text and melody which are mostly intended for young children. They are passed down to the next generation through oral communication (Lim, 2014, p. 24).

Nursery rhymes are not just a pairing of words and musical notes. They involve specific features, in terms of themes selection, vocabulary, repetitive forms and the use of rhyme, that make them different from the other types of texts. Regarding the selection of themes, this feature may make nursery rhymes more comprehensible due to their inherent familiarity for children. Such familiarity may result from a similar cultural background or life-related topics. According to Mora (2000, p.12), rhymes and songs are a common experience from early infancy. Moreover, the nursery rhymes with themes closely related to children's real life experiences would be another priority since these rhymes concentrate on young children's background knowledge, such as animals, friendship, family etc. In terms of nursery rhymes vocabulary, this component might be targeted at different aspects of comprehensibility. Richards (1969) proposed that the essential feature that participates in understanding rhymes and songs lies in the language not the music. Murphy (1992) ascertained that the reading level of song lyrics was found to be located at the simplest level of readability. Repetition is another common feature of nursery rhymes. The repetitive forms used in nursery rhymes vary in different components of linguistic structures. According to Yuliana (2003), the refrain, a regularly occurring phrase after every verse, is the preferred format of nursery rhymes. Sentence pattern repetition is another common type of repetitive forms in children's songs. For example, the Arabic song 'Alwudou' "Ablution" introduces the repeated sentence اذا رضي الله عن مسلم (If Allah is pleased with a Muslim) pleasantly. One of the essential rhetorical elements in nursery rhymes is the use of rhyme. This is a common feature in rhymes and songs. Rhyme is considered as a basic component of rhymes and songs. Harley (1992, pp. 114-15)

pinpointed that "rhyme has been, and continues to be, identified by children as the most popular poetic device". Davidson and Heartwood (1997, p. 41) indicated that rhyme functions as a "comfort in expectation" as its repeated occurrence always leads listeners to join in with the harmony. Nursery rhymes are of various cognitive, linguistic, social, communicative and emotional functions. According to Lim (2014), some nursery rhymes are used for celebrating festivals, introducing new concepts or preserving ideologies. They can also be employed for fostering children's language development. For instance, when singing the *Alphabet Song*, kindergarten students can learn the alphabets while when chanting the *Ten Little Indians*, they can acquire the knowledge on numbers, (Parlakian &Lerner, 2010).

1.4 Discourse Analysis

The origin of discourse analysis can be traced back many years ago. Gray, in introducing his book The Grammatical Foundations of Rhetoric: Discourse Analysis (1977, p. 1), stated rhetoric has been the study of extended discourse, and not so much the breaking down to extended discourse as the building up. But like grammar, rhetoric has tended to take for granted the sentence, distinguish it has looked for its data in more extended, complex discourse rather than within sentences. Crystal (1997), defined linguistics of text is the formal account of the linguistic principles governing the structure of texts. De Beaugrande and Dressler (1986, p. 32) defined text as "a communicative event" that must satisfy the following seven criteria: 1. Cohesion, 2. Coherence, 3.Intentionality, 4. Acceptability, 5. Informativity, 6. Situationality, and 7.Intertextuality. The first three criteria have to do with text linguistics, text-internal, and the remaining criteria are

closely related with context, text-external, i.e., discourse analysis. In other words, text linguistics is considered a more formal and structural approach in the study of texts, whereas discourse analysis covers the functional approach and, consequently, the social aspects of texts. Brown & Yule (1998, p. 112) clarified that even though certain conventions are followed by all the speakers, there are some personal impromptu on the texts that can be expressed in different ways. Therefore, the analysis of discourse is necessarily the analysis of language in use which cannot be restricted to the description of linguistics form independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs. In short, discourse is more than a message from a sender to a receiver, and a reader or listener is more than just receiver who decodes incoming signals. Discourse is connected to utterances or sentences by which a sender communicates to the receiver where there is context within the discourse. On the basis of what have been mentioned above, discourse analysis of nursery rhymes requires, in addition to the analysis of abstract linguistic features, the analysis of some extra linguistic aspects, such as text structure, purposes of text and the functions or purposes of linguistic forms.

1.5 Van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Approach to Discourse Analysis

Van Dijk is greatly respected as the most referred and quoted practitioner in the field of media discourse. The broad spectrum of his work has been often cited and mentioned by critical analysts not only in the media discourse-related studies but also implied into researches that do not essentially portray the perspective of the critical DA. Van Dijk's (1993) structural analysis was based on a detailed analysis of the various levels of the description. He not only involves the basic levels of grammar, phonology, morphology

and semantics, but he also assesses higher level properties, forms and dimensions of the text. Even though, coherence, topics, themes and the symbolic and schematic formations of the text are part of his structural analysis Van Dijk (ibid.) held that discourse should not be mistaken as a merely isolated structure of text and dialogue. The elements that give rationality and factuality to the text are thebasis of analysis at the microstructure level. There is a semantic connection between propositions, arrangement of the sentence (syntactic),vocabulary (lexicon), other rhetorical elements and the practices of quoting and direct or indirect reporting. However, the macrostructure analysis requires central attention as it deals with the holistic schemata and the thematic structure of the text and thus acquire an essential status. Van Dijk's (2000) framework for media discourse analysis integrated two more conventional and traditional approaches. He incorporated text-based interpretive approach with context-based societal structure for his in-depth analysis. Van Dijk (ibid.) managed to attain a distinctive edge over other approaches; the cognitive analysis adds yet another dimension to his approach and distinguishes it from the rest. According to his findings, socio-cognition comprising the social and personal context is the mediating factor for bringing society and discourse together. He explains that the behaviors and mental representations of members of a particular group constitute a social cognition system. Finally, Van Dijk's (2001) socio-cognitive approach focused on the tripartite discourse-cognition-society model of ideology. According to Van Dijk (ibid.) here "discourse" means "communicative event", including conversation, written text, and any "semiotic" or multimedia dimension of signification. Personal or social "cognition" involves"mental" or "memory" structures, representations and processes in

discourse and interaction such as beliefs, evaluations, and emotions."Society" includes both microstructures of interactions, as well as societal and political structures such as group relations, institutions, and political system. Van Dijk (ibid.) viewed "the combined cognitive and socialdimensions of the triangle as defining the relevant (local and global)context of discourse" (p. 98). Nursery rhymes are involve the use of different linguistic elements at the macrostructure and microstructure levels. Moreover, the cognitive and socio-cultural dimensions are essential in doing a discourse analysis to nursery rhymes as there are some messages delivered by the writer or singer to the audience with certain situation or context in the rhyme.

1.6 Aims of the Study

This study aims at investigating the discoursal features of Arabic nursery rhymes through the application of Van Dijk's model by carrying out amacrostructural (thematic), superstructural (schematic),and microstructural analysis of nursery rhymes in Arabic. Moreover, the study aims to examine the use of cultural references in Arabic nursery rhymes.

1.7 Hypotheses of the Study

From a discoursal point of view, it is hypothesized that Arabic nursery rhymes have specific macrostructural, superstructural and microstructural organization. In addition, in terms of cultural references used in Arabic nursery rhymes, in its hypothesized that religious expressions are the dominating references in these rhymes.

1.8 Method of the Study

This study follows the descriptive and analytic method in investigating thediscoursal and cultural features of Arabic nursery rhymes.The method involves analyzing themes, contents and the most salientlinguistic features of nursery rhymes in Arabic. It alsoincludes describing the existing cultural aspects in the targeted rhymes.The analysis constituents of nursery rhymes areidentified and presented in tables allotted for easier demonstrating of the researchdata.

1.9 Data Collection

Five Arabic nursery rhymes have been chosen from a collection of nursery rhymes found on the internet as well as in nursery rhyme books by potters,(1997). The selection of these rhymes has been made on the basis of their variety in terms of theme, linguistic features and cultural references.

For the purpose of using the most relevant rhymes to the topic of this study, all the collected nursery rhymes have been read thoroughly and then selected by pinpointing the themes and the main linguistic andcultural features in each rhyme. The selected nursery rhymes include "بسم الله"In the name of Allah", الوضوء "Ablution", نخلة"Palm tree", و أمي أبي"My Parents" and أين المؤمنين "Son of the believers".

The Model Used for Analyzing Arabic Nursery Rhymes
Van Dijk's (1998) socio-cognitive approach of discourse analysis have been developed as a model for data analysis in this study. This model includes most of text components; the macrostructure, superstructure and microstructure elements, in addition to the used cultural references. Table (1)below shows the general form of the developed model used

to make a discoursal analysis of the collected data. This model has been designed in the form off our levels of data analysis. Each level includes some specific unit/s of analysis as demonstrated in the table below.

Table (1) Model of discourse analysis of Arabic nursery rhymes

Name of Rhyme	Level of Analysis	Unit of Analysis
	Macrostructure	Theme (Representation)
	Superstructure	Introduction, Content, Closing
	Microstructure	Semantics, Stylistics, Syntax, Rhetoric
	Cultural Features	Cultural expressions

1. **Macrostructure (Thematic)analysis of Arabic nursery rhymes**

Table (2)Thematic features of Arabic nursery rhymes

Name of Rhyme	Representation
"In the name of Allah"بسم الله	Educational and Religious Rhyme
الوضوء"Ablution"	Educational and Religious Rhyme
"Palm tree"نخلة	Description and Education
أمي و أبي"My Parents"	Love, Respect and Praise
أبن المؤمنين "Son of the believers"	Educational and Religious Rhyme

From the data presented in the table above it is noticed that majority of the investigated Arabic nursery rhymes have religious and educational themes. This result supports the view that nursery rhymes are not just for fun. They are basically meant to introduce numerous educational and social lessons. They also promote various moral values, such

as respect, love, praise. However, Arabic nursery rhymes pay more attention to religious issues. This reflects the specific ideological and cultural background of the Arabic society.

2. Superstructure (Schematic)analysis of Arabic nursery rhymes

Table (3)Superstructure features of the Arabic nursery rhyme "بسم الله" (Text 1)

Name of Rhyme	Unit of Analysis	Data
بسم الله "In the name of Allah"	Introduction	بسم الله بسم الله*** أحلى كلام اتعلمناه
	Content	لما نأكل لما نشرب *** لازم كلمة بسم الله لما نقرأ لما نكتب *** لازم كلمة بسم الله لما نجري لما نلعب *** لازم كلمة بسم الله
	Closing	بسم الله بسم الله*** أحلى كلام اتعلمناه

This song has started with a clear and simple declarative statement in the form of a repeated clause 'بسم الله بسم الله ' In the name of Allah' so as to attract the children's consideration smoothly. The content provided primary activities followed by the same expression "بسم الله" to show the obligation of using it. The closing has repetition of the introductory line. This repetition is meant to emphasize the vitality of memorizing and saying the expression 'بسم الله' 'in the name of Allah' before doing any activity.

Table (4) Superstructure features of the Arabic nursery rhyme "الوضوء" (Text 2)

Name of Rhyme	Unit of Analysis	Data
الوضوء "Ablution"	Introduction	بني توضأ بماء طهور فماء الوضوء لوجهك نور
	Content	إذا رضي الله عن مسلماً أتاه الهناء ونال السرور بني توضأ وقم للفلاح ففي طاعة الله سر النجاح
	Closing	إذا رضي الله عن مسلماً بدا مشرق الوجه مثل الصباح

This song starts in an instructive way in which the child is told 'to do ablution' 'بني توضأ' by using 'pure water' 'بماء طهور' so as to reflect the importance of this rite. The second line of the introduction provides the child with one of the utilities and rewards of ablution, which 'brings brightness to his face' 'لوجهك نور'. This kind of reward stimulates the child to keep on doing ablution. The ablution by using 'pure water' which 'brings brightness to his face' 'لوجهك نور'. The content tells the child that the outcome of doing ablution is 'Allah's blessing' which will give him pleasure, happiness and success. The song ends with pleasing statements that show the child the kinds of good results obtained from performing ablution and prayers. The child is taught again that Allah will be satisfied with him and his face will be 'brightening like the light of the early morning' ' مشرق الوجه مثل الصباح'.

Table (5) Superstructure features of the Arabic nursery rhyme " نخلة " (Text 3)

Name of Rhyme	Unit of Analysis	Data
نخلة Palm tree	Introduction	نون نخل في البستان يعطي بلحا مثل السكر
	Content	وله سعف كالأغصان نصنع منه حصير أصفر نون نخل ما أجمله يزهو في وسط الصحراء
	Closing	وله جذع ما أطوله لا يشكو من نقص الماء

Discussion

This poem has been introduced to children in a lovely and attractive manner. The first line begins with the sound 'نون', which is the initial sound of the word 'نخل ' 'palm tree'. Then the writer indicates the location of palm tree 'البستان' 'the farm' where it is mostly found in countryside. In addition, the poet describes the taste of palm fruit as that of sugar. This description makes children enjoy the song as they are fond of sugar. The content of the poem involves describing of the palm tree and teaching children the beneficial aspect of it. the poet describes 'the palm fronds' 'سعف' as the branches in other trees, these fronds as a useful object used to make 'حصير' 'mats'. Then, the writer moves to describe the beauty and strength of the palm tree as a green tree taking a pride in itself in the middle of a desert where many trees cannot grow. The closing part of the song provides another educational description of the palm tree in a mode of wonder 'ما أطوله' 'How tall it is!'. Here, the children will learn that the tall stump of the palm helps it to

keep enough water, preserves its life and makes it dispense with water for a long time. This information helps the children to understand why palms grow up in deserts and keep green all the time.

Table (6) Superstructure features of the Arabic nursery rhyme "أمي وأبي"(Text4)

Name of Rhyme	Unit of Analysis	Data
أمي و أبي My Parents	Introduction	أمي وأبي ياً قمرينٌ
	Content	يا نور القلب ونور العينُ
	Closing	لكما مني ألف تحيةَ كل صباحٍ وكل عشيةٌ

Discussion

This poem starts with describing the mother and the father as 'two moons' 'قمرين'. The sun and the moon provide the world with their light all the time, and the parents do the same for their children. The poet means to tell children that without parents our life will be as dark as night without moon light. the content provides further description and explanation of the importance of the parents and the kind of light they represent. Metaphorically they are defined as 'the light for the heart' 'نور القلب' and 'the light of the eye' 'نور العين'. By such descriptions, the poet intends to say that the secret of love for parents is that they are the source of our existence. In the closing, the poet moves to mention the duty of children towards their parents. The parents should be respected, praised and obeyed them.. This kind of treatment with parents is not limited to certain time, but should be showed all the time, 'كل صباح و كل عشية' 'every day and every night'.

Table(7)Superstructure features of the Arabic nursery rhyme"أبن المؤمنين" (Text5)

Name of Rhyme	Unit of Analysis	Data
أبن المؤمنين Son of the believers	Introduction	أنا أبن المؤمنين صار عمري خمس سنين
	Content	جيت على صف الروضة أتعلم أحكام الدين
	Closing	النظافة من الأيمان والصلاة عامود الدين

Discussion

The first part of the song introduces the child's religious identity and his age. The songwriter pronounces his belonging to Islam by saying'أنا ابن المؤمنين' 'I am the son of the believers', and shows his readiness to start his educational career as he reaches the age of five.

The second part of the rhyme presents the actual mission that the child is going to achieve. As he comes to join the kindergarten. In spite of the different aspects of education the child will receive, the purpose of joining the kindergarten is shown in the song to be religious. Here the child is going to learn about the basic principles of his religion.

Finally, the closing part of the rhyme represents the most important practices the child should learn, purity and prayers.

3. **Microstructure analysis of Arabic nursery rhymes**

Table (8) Microstructure analysis of the Arabic nursery rhyme "بسم الله" (Text 1)

Name of Rhyme	Unit of Analysis	Data
بسم الله "In the name of Allah"	Semantics	Collocation: نأكل- نشرب،نقرأ-نكتب، نجرى- نلعب
	Syntax	Simplestructure: without premodificatinos or postmodifications except for (أحلى كلام) in which the word كلام is premodified by the adjective أحلى
	Stylistics	Expression: بسم الله Parallel structure: نشرب(v.)،نأكل(v.)- نقرأ(v.)،نكتب(v.)- نجرى(v.)نلعب(v.) Short clauses Colloquial:لما
	Rhetoric	Anaphora:لما

Discussion

Semantically, the rhyme has simple propositional structures. The lexical verbs 'نأكل 'eat', 'نشرب ' 'drink', 'نقرأ ' 'read', 'نكتب ' 'write', 'نجرى ' 'run', and 'نلعب ' 'play' are collocations referring to the simplest activities practised by children at this age.

The syntactic features in this lyric, simple structures represented by active voice appeared in the whole song. This means that the focus is on the agent. The modifier 'أحلى' 'sweetest' is used to postmodify the word 'كلام' 'speech' so as to attract the children's attention to the beauty and loveliness of the expression 'بسم الله' 'In the name of Allah'.

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The most important stylistic feature is the parallel structure of the song. That the songwriter starts with eating and drinking 'نأكل-نشرب ' which are more needed for children before anything. Then he moves to reading and writing 'نقرأ-نكتب" read – write' which are needed for children in their current age. Finally comes running and playing 'نجرى- نلعب' 'run – play' as the last priority after acquiring the aforementioned essential skills. The other stylistic feature is the use of expression 'بسم الله' (In the name of Allah), in the whole poem, and this is an indication that children are instructed to commence everything with the expression 'بسم الله' 'In the name of Allah'. The colloquial form 'لما"when' of the standard word 'عندما' 'when' is used by the songwriter so as to make the children more familiar with the rhyme.

Rhetorically, The regular repetition of 'لما' 'when' at the beginning of many successive phrases in the poem creates anaphora. The form is used to add rhythm to the song and to emphasize the point of time.

Table (9) Microstructure analysis of the Arabic nursery rhyme "الوضوء"(Text 2)

Unit of Analysis	Data
Semantics	توضأ – طهور – صلاة:Collocations السرور – الفلاح – النجاح

	طاعة – رضي – الله
	مشرق – صباح
	نور - وجه
	Synonymy: الهناء-السرور
	الفلاح– النجاح
Syntax	Sentence structure: cause-effect, conditionals
	Active voice
	Vocative: بني (يا)
Stylistics	Short and complex sentences
	Foregrounding
	Parallel structure: conditional statements
Rhetoric	Simile: بدا مشرق الوجه مثل الصباح
	Anaphora: إذا رضي الله - بني توضأ
	Metaphor: لوجهك نور

Discussion

Semantically, all the lexical words used in this song have the same positive connotative end. The word 'توضأ' 'perform ablution' denotatively means to get oneself cleaned by using water but connotatively means to prepare yourself for the more important task which is performance of the prayers and the water should be 'pure and clean' 'طهور'. The lexical words 'نور' 'brightness', 'الهناء' 'pleasure' and 'السرور' 'happiness' signify the utilities and benefits obtained from keeping on performing ablution. Similarly, the word 'الفلاح' denotatively means success, but connotatively means performing prayers.

The use of the synonymous words الفلاح – النجاح and السرور– الهناءprovides the song with multiple sense of connotations.

As for the syntactic aspects in this rhyme, the sentence structure is formed in the style of cause and effect. Each pair of lines start with the cause as in ' بني توضأ بماء طهور ' 'My son, perform the ablution with pure water' and ends with its effect ' فماء الوضوء لوجهك نور' 'the water of ablution is your face brightness' to the end of the song. The active voice is the common form in the text as the concern is on doing the instructions given by the songwriter to the child. Finally, the implied vocative expression'(يا) بني)"(You)my son' initiates the poem by addressing the child so as to get his attention to the song. Moreover, in line six the sentence pattern AS (Adverbial + Subject) is clearly shown to emphasize Allah's obedience through foregrounding the adverbial.

Stylistically, For the parallel structure, the systematic composition of the statements is observed. As mentioned above, each statement is made up of two lines where the first line provides the cause and the second line provides the effect or result. Short sentences are used to help children comprehend and memorize the poem easily. Finally, the style of foregrounding is used in one of the stanzas for the purpose of emphasis.

Finally, the songwriter closed the poem with using the literary device of simile. As a lovely conclusion, the father is telling his son that 'his face will become as bright as the light of the early morning' 'بدا مشرق الوجه مثل الصباح'. The rhetorical device of anaphora, the regular repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning, as the phrase بني 'إذا رضي الله عن مسلما 'If Allah is satisfied with a believer'. Moreover, the poem usesتوضأand'

the metaphor نور لوجهك 'brightness for your face' to express the brightness of one's face when performing ablution.

Table (10) Microstructure analysis of the Arabic nursery rhyme " نخلة " (Text 3)

Unit of Analysis	Data
Semantics	Collocation: سعف – أغصان بستان – نخل – بلح Opposites: الصحراء- الماء
Syntax	Sentence Structure: SV, VS Active voice Sentence pattern: Affirmative, Exclamation, Negative
Stylistics	Words choice: السكر، يزهو Short clauses Parallel structure
Rhetoric	Simile: بلحا مثل السكر، سعف كالأغصان Personification: يزهو End Rhyme: البستان-الأغصان، السكر-أصفر، أجمله-أطوله، الصحراء-الماء

Discussion

Semantically, the words (سعف،أغصان،بستان،نخل،بلح) collocate with each other. The use of the opposites 'الصحراء' 'desert' and 'الماء' 'water' denotes the palm resistance to the lack of water and its green shape in dry places.

Syntactically, this short song has two patterns of sentence structure; SV and VS. The first part SV pattern while the second part is VS . This constant variation in structure is meant to introduce the subject of the poem. Besides, all the statements are in active voice since the focus is on the subject of the poem in all positions. This form helps to make the song simple for children to be repeated and memorized. Finally, the exclamation expressions 'ما أجمله' 'how beautiful it is' and 'ما أطوله' 'how tall it is' lead the children to wonder about the special nature of the palm and also to learn from these wonders.

Stylistically, word choice serves to introduce the poem in an attractive way. For example, the word 'السكر' 'sugar' is compared to the taste of the palm fruit. This likeness of taste makes children love the description as well as the song. Similarly, the word 'يزهو' 'pride' is used to refer to the beauty of the palm especially when it grows in a dry land, the desert. This description leads the children to wonder about the reason that makes palms resist the hard dry weather. Regarding the parallel structure in the poem, it has been manifested by using SV and VS sentence patterns to support the stylistic structure of the song.

Finally, the rhetorical devices. Simile has been used twice for different purposes. The taste of palm fruit is compared to that of sugar 'بلحا مثل السكر' 'palm fruit as sugar'. This comparison drives children to love the tree and enjoy the song. And the fronds of the

palm are compared to the branches of other trees 'سعف كالأغصان'. In the personification, the words 'يزهو'pride' and 'يشكو' 'complain' add the human quality of pride to the nonhuman object, the palm tree, to personify its feeling of having good qualities. For end rhyme, there are four forms of closing lines and parts of lines in a melodious tone. As in 'أجمله-أطوله' 'how beautiful – how tall' and 'البستان-الأغصان' 'the farm – the branches', 'السكر-أصفر' 'sugar – yellow', and 'الصحراء-الماء' 'desert – water'.

Table (11) Microstructure analysis of the Arabic nursery rhyme "أمي و أبي" (Text 4)

Unit of Analysis	Data
Semantics	Collocation: نور: قلب – عين Synonymy: قمرين - نور Opposites: صباح - عشيه
Syntax	Sentence pattern: SP, A.S. Active voice Sentence type: Affirmative, the use of vocative
Stylistics	Word choice:قمرين، نور، ألف، كل Very short clauses and phrases Parallel structure
Rhetoric	Metaphor:أمي و أبي يا قمرين، يا نور القلب و نور العين End Rhyme:العين – قمرين، عشية – تحية

Discussion

Semantically, the words (نور،قلب،العين)collocate with each other. the words 'قمرين' 'two moons' and 'نور' 'light' in line two are used synonymously to signify the importance and amount of love for parents. The use of opposite words 'صباح - عشية' 'day – night' represents the everlasting respect that should be given to parents.

Syntactically speaking, this short poem has been composed of very simple sentences which include only a noun and the particle 'يا', or the determiner 'كل' 'every'. What is remarkable in the structure of the language used in this poem is that all the statements are verbless. In addition, sentence subject-predicate pattern in 'أمي وأبي يا قمرين' and adverb-subject pattern in 'لكما مني' are used. This pattern includes a vocative particle 'يا' as a denotation to the direct relationship between the child and his parents.

Stylistically, the word choice followed by the writer supports the themes of the poem to a great extent. To illustrate, the word 'قمرين،نور،' has been used to introduce the parents as the two very important sources of light that they very benefit . The words 'ألف،كل' are used to specify the amount of praise and respect towards parents. This simple form of clauses and phrases is meant to make the rhyme very easy for young children to repeat and memorize. Regarding the parallel structure in the poem, the systematic use of short and simple statements in all the lines is a feature relating to the stylistic aspect of the poem.

The rhetorical elements in the poem, there are two. First, the implied and imaginative comparison of parents with moons in line one 'أمي و أبي يا قمرين' which represents the metaphorical feature in the poem. Similarly, 'نور القلب و نور العين' 'light of the heart – light of the eye'. The second rhetorical element in the poem is its melodious end

rhyme. This feature has been achieved by closing the first two lines with the same musical tone as 'العين-قمرين' and by closing the last two lines with 'تحية-عشية'.

Table (13) Microstructure analysis of the Arabic nursery rhyme"أبن المؤمنين" (Text 5)

Unit of Analysis	Data
Semantics	Collocation: أحكام الدين، النظافة من الإيمان، الصلاة عامود الدين Synonymy: الدين – الإيمان
Syntax	Sentence pattern: SV, VS + Adverbial Sentence type: Declarative Short clauses
Stylistics	Word choice: ابن المؤمنين، خمس سنين، صف الروضة، أتعلم، أحكام ، الدين، النظافة، الصلاة Short clauses Parallel structure Informal style
Rhetoric	Restatement: الدين – الإيمان Signposting: الصلاة عامود الدين End Rhyme

Discussion

Semantically, the collocation, 'أحكام' 'the legal provisions' and 'الدين' 'the religion' collocate with each other in terms of their relationship as the first describes which aspects

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of the second to be learned. Similarly, the word 'النظافة' 'cleanliness' collocates with the expression 'من الإيمان' 'of faith' and the word 'الصلاة' 'prayers' collocates with the expression 'عامود الدين' 'base of religion'. These are customary collocations in the Islamic context and all Muslims are familiar with them. Concerning synonymy, the words 'الدين' 'the religion' and 'الإيمان' 'faith' are used interchangeably to refer to the same religious reference, which is Islam.

The syntactic elements. First, all the sentences used in the poem have simple structures without premodifications or postmodifications except for 'أحكام الدين' 'the legal provisions of the religion' in which the word 'الدين' 'the religion' is premodified by the noun 'أحكام' 'the legal provisions'. Second, two patterns of sentence are used equally in the poem; SV and VS, followed by adverbials. Finally, all the sentences are declarative as the rhyme is meant to teach children some lessons about their religion in a direct and a simple way.

Stylistically, Word choice shows the proper sequence of ideas in the poem. The songwriter starts the poem with referring tothe child's identity "ابن المؤمنين"son of the believers'. Then, the age of the child is indicated as 'خمس سنين' 'five years', which represents the proper time to start his education in 'the kindergarten' 'صف الروضة'. There the child is going to learn 'أتعلم' some matters related to his religion, 'النظافة' 'cleanliness' and 'الصلاة' 'prayers'. The poem is composed of short clauses so as to help the child to comprehend and memorize the song easily. Parallel structure is represented by the systematic use of SV and VS patterns. The SV pattern focus on the subjects 'أنا' 'I', 'النظافة' 'cleanliness' and 'الصلاة' 'prayers', whereas the VS focus on the events 'صار عمري' 'my age

is', 'جيت' 'I have come' and 'أتعلم' 'learn'. Finally, this rhyme is characterized by the use of rather informal words, namely, 'جيت' 'I have come' and 'صار' 'is'.

The rhetorical devices, first, restatement is signified by using different words ' الدين – الإيمان ' 'religion-faith' to repeat the same idea or point; the child's religion. Second, signposting is used by emphasizing a point 'الصلاة' by announcing its importance as ' عامود الدين' 'the base of religion'. Finally, end rhyme this feature has been achieved by closing all the lines with the same musical tone as 'سنين – الدين – الدين - الدين' 'years- the religion- the religion'.

4. Analysis of cultural references in Arabic nursery rhymes

Table (14) Analysis of cultural references in Arabic nursery rhymes

Name of Rhyme	Cultural References
"In the name of Allah"بسم الله	بسم الله
"Ablution"الوضوء	الله، الوضوء مسلماً، الْفلاح،
"Palm tree"نخلة	نخل،سعف، حصيرا، الصحراء
"My Parents"أمي و أبي	نور القلب، نور العين
"Son of the believers"أبن المؤمنين	المؤمنين، أحكام الدين، الايمان، الصلاة

According to the results obtained in table (14) above, it is found that Arabic nursery rhymes are cultural-bound. Language is related to culture and culture is related to people's identity, which means that the language is bound with people's identity and can be identified by their vocabulary. The effective selection of cultural information represents the cultural strategies used by songwriters for the purpose of enhancing the

comprehension of rhymes. The cultural references found in the analyzed nursery rhymes are of different types, such as religious, social (conventions, beliefs, habits, social organizations), environmental (ecology, place names, plants) and linguistic (fixed expressions, idioms, insults). However, religious expressions are found to be the most frequent cultural references implemented in the analyzed nursery rhymes.

Conclusions

On the basis of the analysis of the obtained data, this study has arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Religious references have been found in Arabic nursery rhymes. This point proves the hypothesis of this study which states "Religious references are more characteristic of Arabic nursery rhymes ".

2. Regarding nursery rhymes discoursal organization, this study has reached the following conclusions. First, Arabic nursery rhymes are not written for entertaining only. They provide several educational and social lessons and promote various moral values. Second, Arabic nursery rhymes follow the same schematic structure. They are composed of all the conventional categories; introduction, content and closing in the same hierarchical organization, in which each category has its own properties and functions. Third, Arabic nursery rhymes are written in a highly selected linguistic devices that match the children's mentality and their ability of comprehension and acquisition. Accordingly, the third hypothesis of the

present study which reads as "Nursery rhymes have macrostructural, superstructural and microstructural organization" has been verified.

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