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## **RURAL MOROCCAN CHILDREN'S PLAY AND TOYS IN MULTICULTURAL AND MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The goal of this working paper is to illustrate that children's play is embedded in a network of socialization patterns, linguistic environments, and cultural change that provide a framework for their development. To make this point I will draw from my work on the play activities and toys, both self-made and bought, of children three to ten-year-old from different central and southern Moroccan communities, with a focus on my current research in the Sidi Ifni region. I will illustrate that children in such communities live in more or less multicultural and multilingual environments, and that these environments influence their activities. The database includes observations, interviews, photographs and videos, a combination of different kinds of methodologies and different sources of data.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

First of all, I want to stress that there is no claim whatsoever for the gathered information on Moroccan children's play activities and toys to be representative and complete. This means that the absence of information on a given play activity or type of toys cannot be used to state that these are inexistent. The involved families have mostly been found through fortunate contacts. I here want to express my sincere thanks for the hospitality and collaboration received from many families and individuals, especially several primary and secondary school teachers.

Before entering the topic, the reader could find some usefulness in the following notes on my background, sources of information and research methods. Already during my studies my major topic of interest has been childhood and socialization. Between 1975 and 1977, I did fieldwork among the semi-nomadic Ghrib from the Tunisian Sahara. It is during my first field trip that I experienced the advantage and the usefulness of looking at children's play and playgroups. So I decided to concentrate on children's games and toys in the first place (see Rossie, 1993). Having elaborated a quite complete analysis of Ghrib children's play and toys, I started to look for the same information on Saharan and North African children in the concerned literature (1) and in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris where I found in the reserves an important collection of toys from these regions. Since 1992 I am conducting yearly research periods in Morocco, especially in rural areas and popular quarters of towns (2).

Trained first as a social worker and then as an africanist, my research methods belong first of all to the ethnographic research tradition based on participation, observation, unstructured and semi-structured interviews, demonstrations, use of informants and interpreters, making slides and some silent 16 mm films (3). I am using a detailed descriptive approach with a qualitative perspective when analysing specific children's play activities and toys, and the socio-cultural context in which these take place. These data are used for a comparative analysis published in the series Saharan and North African Children's Play, Games and Toys. Yet, all this should by no means be seen as a finished study. On the contrary, it is only when other scholars will verify and supplement my data and the interpretations I have elaborated, that a more objective and representative view can be worked out. Since I have been introduced to social semiotics by Theo van Leeuwen in 1997, I have tried to apply this approach in looking for "how meaning is produced and communicated in specific social settings" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 264) (4). During the last two years I have especially been influenced by the work of Shlomo Ariel and Artin Göncü.

All this data gathering and research mainly offers information on the following aspects (5):

- social aspects such as the influence on play and toys of residence, family organization, gender, age, and interpersonal relations;
- cultural aspects such as the relationship between play and toys on the one hand, cultural practices, rituals, local ways and contents of communication, on the other hand;
- linguistic aspects such as stereotyped sayings, names of games and toys, texts of songs;

- toy related aspects such as the great variety of material and toy design, self-made versus bought toys;
- the influence on all this of socio-cultural and economic change, of new means of communication and information, of the school system.

My contacts with Shlomo Ariel and Artin Göncü have convinced me of the utility of videotaping children's play and toy-making activities. Thus I have started to make videos of southern Moroccan children's doll play and construction play during the first three months of 2002, completed with the audio recording of the players' dialogues. This has been possible thanks to the help of a talented primary school teacher, Boubaker Daoumani, born in the Sidi Ifni region and speaking as well Teshelhit, the local Amazigh language (6), as Moroccan Arabic. I have made four videos between 31 January and 4 March 2002. The play activities recorded on these videos last between 25 and 40 minutes. The age of the girls and boys seen in the three videos varies between four and eight years. After video recording the play activity itself, an unstructured interview with the players has been video recorded and, in three of the four cases, also a video or audio-recorded interview with one of the parents was done. The parents have given their permission to make a video of their children's play and to use it for educational non-commercial purposes.

It is very useful to complement the information gathered through video recording play activities with data from unstructured and semi-structured interviews of the players, of older children and of adults, especially the parents. This makes it possible to obtain the necessary socio-cultural background information and to situate and explain several recorded play events and related topics. It also promotes a further familiarization with the concerned children and their families. This necessitates however, an adequate collaboration with a suited local research assistant.

Concerning the video recordings made during my last fieldtrip, it must be stressed that especially in the isolated house environment, the presence of a foreign researcher and of the girl's teacher caused a disturbance of the normal play behaviour. In the case of the last video it explains the children's shyness and unease especially on the level of verbal expression. In contrast to the Sidi Ifni children who live near the seashore and beach camping and are much more acquainted with video filming, it will be necessary to uphold a continued contact with the players and their family of the third video, and probably also in the case of village children, before being able to overcome this disturbing presence of the researchers.

The three videos show doll play and in two cases also construction play of children from a rural area. The play settings and the themes of the pretend play was freely chosen by the players themselves. In two videos the children live in the small town Sidi Ifni at the southern Moroccan Atlantic coast. The third video was made outside an isolated house along the asphalt road 4 km from Sidi Ifni and at the foot of a hill where a small Amazigh village is located 2 km up road. Close to this house and at the seashore there are tourists in Mobil homes all over the year, and on the beach there is a hotel and restaurant (Lagzira). Most villages of this area have an Amazigh-speaking population but many people also speak Moroccan Arabic, some French and/or Spanish. The school system does not allow the teaching of or in Amazigh language so that Teshelhit-speaking children entering the first year of primary school must start to learn Arabic.

Sidi Ifni is a special town of some twenty thousand inhabitants with a really multicultural and multilingual character, a town visited by tourists all over the year. The region is originally Amazigh territory but the ethnic and linguistic border with the Arabic-speaking Sahrawi is nearby, a first village being situated at 30 km south of the town. Although a Spanish influence exists since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Sidi Ifni and its region has only been a Spanish territory from 1934 till 1969. From a linguistic point of view one can hear the locals speak four languages, Teshelhit, Moroccan Arabic, French and Spanish, for the last language mostly by men older than fifty who went to school during the Spanish occupation.

The material and socio-cultural situation of the children participating in the three videos differs markedly. The first video, made on 31 January 2002, shows Fatiha and Yasin, a girl of seven years and a boy of four years from a popular class family. Both children only speak Moroccan Arabic and the girl goes to the first year of primary school. The mother who almost completed secondary school speaks Arabic and French. The father is retired. He served in the Spanish army but later on fought against the Spanish occupation. He speaks Arabic and Spanish. This family with four children lives in a simple house with access to local TV. The children's toys are both self-made and shop-bought. The play scene is in the street just before the boy's house, a street parallel with the seashore and beach camping. A sixteen-year-old sister, speaking French quite well, sometimes does the laundry for tourists. Although the players are used to see photographing and filming tourists and the mother of Yasin stated that it is no problem at all if people make pictures of her young children, the presence of the video camera seems to create some disturbance at least as far as Yasin is concerned. However, it is also possible that his behaviour showing regularly a certain level of weariness and embarrassment is more due to the fact that he has been put in a situation of doll making and doll play he does not like much. Prior to the filming I met the older sisters of Yasin and then the children themselves and their mother. I also went to visit them with the Moroccan teacher, Boubaker Daoumani, who collaborated in the realization of all the videos.

In the second video, made on 10 February 2002, three girls, seven or nine-year-old, are engaged in doll play on the terrace of a small hotel-restaurant situated near the beach and beach-camping. Normally the doll play takes place at the home of Awatif and Jalila among others because of the availability of the toys. For the video recording, however, they preferred to play on the flat roof of the family hotel-restaurant. These two sisters, six and nine-year-old, are the only children of a middle class family living in a simple house but equipped with parabolic TV, video and computer (without Internet facilities). The mother and father have finished secondary school and speak French fluently. The father also speaks Teshelhit and is a responsible technician at the local telephone company. The two girls go to primary school, speak Arabic and a little French, daily meet with tourists, make designs on the home computer and regularly go to an Internet shop to play games, make puzzles and designs on line. All the Barbie's, other dolls, plush animals and toy-utensils are shop-bought and belong to these two girls. They have been locally purchased or given to them by family members living in France or by tourists regularly staying at the hotel, a hotel that has been taken over from the Spanish owners by their maternal grandfather. The presence of a foreign researcher and a Moroccan teacher does not seem to have disturbed the players. At the time of the

recording Awatif and Jalila were already acquainted with myself because of a three weeks stay at the hotel of their family during which I made regular contact with them. The two sisters were even enthusiastic about my proposal to record their play on video. I also introduced the primary school teacher to them some time before the recording took place.

Malika, another nine-year-old girl, plays together with the two sisters. This girl lives two streets away in a Teshelhit-speaking popular class family with access to local TV. She also speaks Moroccan Arabic and goes to primary school. About a year before the making of the video she came to Sidi Ifni from a nearby Amazigh village (Tagragra) and one day she asked the other two girls if she could play with them, this way becoming their friend. Both her parents are illiterate. Malika lives in a really different socio-economic situation. The equipment of the house, the material wealth and the information possibilities are much more limited in her household than in the one of the two sisters.

The third video was filmed outside an isolated house nearby the asphalt road to Sidi Ifni on 4 March 2002. The eight-year-old boy and the six-year-old girl belong to a rather poor black family. In their traditional house there is no electricity, no piped water, no TV. As they do not have sheep or goats they live at a subsistence level. They collect mussels and the father goes fishing with a rod when possible. There are five children in this household, all school going, but both parents are illiterate. The players' mother tongue is Teshelhit but they also speak more or less Moroccan Arabic they learned at school. The older boys speak some French and meet tourists who sojourn in their Mobil home at the seaside, sometimes doing a little job for them. All the toys used in the play are self-made.

When coming back from a first visit to the mountain village Lahfart where Boubaker Daoumani teaches the first grade of primary school, I visited the family of Halima and Fadil. This first visit was followed by two other visits before making the video. Yet, it is especially through the contacts of Boubaker who is Halima's teacher that the video could be made. Still, the presence of a foreign researcher and a local teacher certainly disturbed the players. The specific residential isolation and family situation in which the players live combined with the little exposure to foreigners, to photographing and filming, easily explains the shyness and unease shown by both players. This is among others proven by the very limited use of language even if an older brother and older sister more than once stimulate them to talk to each other as they normally do when playing such a game. When the following day at school, Boubaker asked Halima and Fadil if they continued to play after finishing their miniature houses, they spontaneously said they then perform the marriage festivities and sing a lot of songs at that occasion.

In the following pages I sometimes use the terms 'tradition/al' and 'modern/ity'. From my point of view these categories must be seen as dynamic characteristics of specific communities. They only represent two poles on a scale used for socio-cultural analysis and never refer to unchanging characteristics of petrified communities.

Trying to structure the remarks and viewpoints brought forward by a first analysis of the concerned videos, I make a distinction between the social and interpersonal aspects, the cultural and linguistic aspects, the individual aspects and the material

aspects of the recorded play activities and toys. A detailed description of the scenes and dialogues on which the analysis is based can be found in the appendix.

## 2. SOCIAL AND INTERPERSONAL ASPECTS

### **Video 1: doll play by Yasin, a four-year-old boy, and Fatiha, a seven-year-old girl, Sidi Ifni, 26 min.**

- 2.1. The seven-year-old girl and the four-year-old boy are cousins and their playgroup is made on the basis of family relations and vicinity. According to the older sisters and the mother of the boy, Fatiha and Yasin regularly play together since long, but they also said that Yasin does not like to make dolls.
- 2.2. The social and interpersonal aspects of their play, as recorded on this video, clearly demonstrates its links with a more 'traditional' way of life and male-female relationship and this although the players' families and the children themselves are without any doubt directly and daily influenced by a multicultural situation (living near a beach camping with tourists all over the year, local TV with regular French programs and foreign animation films). Among others, the interpersonal behaviour for escaping direct confrontation, as exemplified by both Fatiha and Yasin during the whole play activity, is a normal behaviour and conforms to the social rules of their community.
- 2.3. From the beginning the play plans and goals of the girl and the boy are not alike as testified by their behaviour and dialogues.
- 2.4. The basic divergence comes from the attitude of the girl and that of the boy towards making dolls and fulfilling female activities.
- 2.5. The players have an unequal status in the play activity and this is largely based on the seniority and greater experience of the girl. Fatiha clearly dominates the play activity that she directs towards the making of dolls and doll play.
- 2.6. Fatiha regularly asks Yasin to help her and to collaborate. During the whole doll play she tries to integrate him in her plans but she only succeeds temporarily to do so.
- 2.7. Yasin does not quit the play activity organized by his older niece nor does he disturb it, he even collaborates now and then but often in a reluctant way (scene 2: Yasin clumsily does as if he makes a doll, scene 41: Yasin opens the rag and gives it to Fatiha who did ask for it) (7).
- 2.8. Yet, the boy mostly opposes, resists, disengage from or negates the role he is offered in the doll play, except those activities that can be seen as male activities. All this is expressed as well verbally as non-verbally. A few examples illustrate this:  
dialogue 1: Fatiha to Yasin "make the house", Yasin replies "but wait, wait!"  
dialogue 18: Fatiha to Yasin "go to prepare (dinner), Yasin replies "am I your sister?"  
scene 9: Yasin throws the sticks aside and is sitting with his back to Fatiha and the play scene  
scene 25: Yasin slightly turns his head from right to left as a negation sign.
- 2.9. The boy clearly refuses the female role his niece tries to impose on him.
- 2.10. He also proceeds with his own actions not in line with the doll play (scene 23-24: dialogue 10: Fatiha to Yasin "and go to make the dinner", Yasin replies "where is the kitchen, there is no kitchen", then Yasin takes the scissors pushes and hits things with it, he takes a stick and tries to make a hole in it with the scissors).

- 2.11. Almost the whole time Fatiha neglects Yasin's non-collaboration. Only on rare occasions she loses patience and twice she invents a personage to overrule the boy's refusal at the same time using this personage to make him a reproach (dialogue 23: Fatiha to Yasin "and eight o'clock is approaching, go to make them breakfast", Yasin replies "go yourself! am I a woman!", Fatiha answers "their big sister has gone to make them a breakfast, she doesn't care about you!").
- 2.12. Fatiha's indirect way of rebuking has a direct effect on Yasin who changes immediately his attitude (scene 39: just then Yasin drops the scissors and takes a stone and a little stick saying to Fatiha "see here the breakfast, see it here, see here the breakfast (2x)". But now Fatiha reverses the roles and it is she who refuses to collaborate, saying "where is it?").
- 2.13. Conflicts between the players are mostly overcome by compromising. Yasin often reacts as if he does not hear Fatiha's order or demand, and she continues to play as if she does not notice the boy's non-cooperation. Once Yasin shows at the same time conformation to the girl's demand and expression of opposition (scene 8: the boy does as if he wants to make the cross-shaped structure of a doll but meanwhile he sits with his back towards the girl and the play setting). Another time he collaborates with dislike (scene 34: Yasin throws a rag asked by Fatiha but with a slightly offensive gesture).
- 2.14. Aggressive reactions do not occur in the doll play.

**Video 2: doll play by three girls, Awatif, seven years, Jalila, nine years and Malika, nine years, Sidi Ifni, 40 min.**

- 2.15. The playgroup consisting of a seven-year old and two nine-year-old girls is based on the sister relationship between Awatif and Jalila and a friendship relationship between Jalila and Malika. Vicinity also plays a role as Malika's family lives about 200 meters away from the sisters' home.
- 2.16. Since almost a year the three form a regular playgroup. The video shows that the three girls are accustomed to play together and to share the same play material belonging to the two sisters.
- 2.17. The play activities as recorded on this video demonstrate the complexity of the situation. In the play activities Western settings and behaviour, new technology (mobile phone), sophisticated toys (Barbie doll with moving facility and music) etc., are combined with 'traditional' settings and behaviour.
- 2.18. Throughout the play activity the plans and goals of the three girls remain consistent and alike. They accept each other's roles without protest and with almost no discussion. There only are a few moments of discussion or opposition mostly from the side of Jalila.
- 2.19. Still, it happens that a player initiates an independent behaviour that almost always is accepted by the others. At a given time Jalila creates a new role for herself, namely the one of video recording the play as I am doing. Malika and Awatif accept the introduction of this role but without relating or interfering with it. Awatif also changes role sometimes but Malika remains during the whole play the 'mother', except when Jalila refuses to be the children's teacher and Malika says she will be the teacher then, but after saying this Malika immediately goes to the 'kitchen'.
- 2.20. The three girls have an unequal status in the doll play. Awatif being two years younger is given a minor role. Although Jalila and Malika treat each other as equals, Malika occupies the major role of the mother. She dominates the whole play activity, as well non-verbally as verbally, and rules the household, the other players and the

'children' (the dolls and soft toy-animals). She does this by upholding a 'traditional' behaviour like a mother does in a popular household, giving orders without explanations and expecting prompt execution.

- 2.21. That it is Malika who plays the leading 'mother' role is remarkable as she evolves on the other players' territory and with their toys. One could explain this by referring to her supposed strong personality. However, I believe it is more adequate to see this situation as the result of a mutual acceptance of the role of a traditional mother played by Malika, a role that belongs more to her family tradition than to the one of Jalila and Awatif. Yet, observation shows that the mother of these two sisters still uses a quite authoritarian way of telling her daughters what to do or not.
- 2.22. When a discussion, opposition or conflict occurs it is immediately or very soon resolved without further escalation. Eventually the player changes slightly the course of action to round the difficulty and/or gives in to the other player's wish. Such a strategy for conflict solution is also used in the first video. A few examples illustrate this:
  - scene 39: Malika takes the mobile phone from Jalila, but Jalila takes it immediately back without any further opposition from Malika;
  - scenes 54-55: Jalila wants to help Malika with the dolls but Malika does not want this. Jalila stops trying to help and looks at the scene with her hands on her hips, she then goes to take the music playing part of a Barbie doll;
  - scenes 63-63: Awatif wants to take the lower part of a Barbie doll used as 'video camera' but Jalila refuses to give it to her, instead she puts it on the ground so that it becomes a moving music player. Awatif accepts this refusal and goes back to the place she was sitting.
- 2.23. Jalila uses twice another way to show her disagreement, namely by repeating ironically what Malika is saying. Scene 43: Jalila takes some objects from the 'table' where Malika is putting toy-utensils; dialogue: Malika says "oh! What she (Jalila) has been doing to me in the kitchen a second time", to what Jalila replies by using exact the same sentence but in an ironical manner.
- 2.24. When Jalila shows some opposition to the 'mother' (Malika) this is related to material items like the mobile phone not to the mother's behaviour.
- 2.25. Aggressive reactions do not occur in the doll play.

### **Video 3: doll play and construction play by Halima, a six-year-old girl, and Fadil, a nine-year-old boy, isolated house at Lagzira, 43 min.**

- 2.26. Concordant information shows that these siblings always play together, not only enjoying this kind of play but also different kinds of ball games.
- 2.27. From the beginning the play plans and goals of the girl and the boy are alike as testified by their behaviour and dialogues.
- 2.28. In contrast to video 1 there is no divergence between the two players concerning their role as well in the doll play, normally viewed as a girls' game, as in the construction play, normally seen as a boys' game.
- 2.29. Halima and Fadil perform at the same time parallel play and collaborative play.
- 2.30. The players have an equal status in the first part of the play activity, the doll play, lasting for about 10 minutes. In the second part, the construction play, Fadil clearly has the leading role. This is based on Fadil's age, the fact that he is more experienced and that construction work is a male activity.
- 2.31. During the further building out of two already existing miniature houses, one for each player, Fadil regularly asks his sister to help him by providing stones and mud.



- 2.32. Halima submits to her brother's demands but sometimes with hesitation or by postponing execution, e.g. scene 6: Fadil says to Halima "bring some mud, eh you! Bring some mud, bring that one there, bring it", Halima replies "what?", Fadil "that mud there, the mud", Halima "wait", Fadil "bring the mud Halima", Halima "what?", Fadil "bring the mud", Halima "what?", Fadil "bring some earth (2x), bring some earth, eh you! bring some earth (2x), Halima bring some earth". After this long and one of the rare real dialogues of the play activity, Halima brings some mud to Fadil.
- 2.33. Conflicts between the players do not occur during the video. Only at the end of the play activity a small confrontation takes place: scene 7: Fadil asks Halima for some mud but she does not give it to him, then Fadil goes to take it himself at the house build by Halima. When Halima shows that she resents this, Fadil throws some of the mud he did take away back to her, then both continue to work with their mud.
- 2.34. The players do not show any sign of aggressive behaviour.

### 3. CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC ASPECTS

#### **Video 1: doll play by Yasin, a four-year-old boy, and Fatiha, a seven-year-old girl, Sidi Ifni, 26 min.**

- 3.1. The making of toys belongs to a traditional children's culture, making dolls normally being a girls' activity. Following information gathered in some central and southern Moroccan communities, small boys also make dolls when being under the supervision of an older girl or when participating in a mixed small children's playgroup. The reluctance of Yasin to make a doll can thus be seen as atypical.
- 3.2. The cultural conformity of the play activities is also attested by the reference to several traditional practices and institutions:
- the role of the mother in the household, preparing the 'children' to go to school, seeing they eat and sleep;
  - the role of the school is mentioned twice but without any development of what happens in the school;
  - the first doll made by Fatiha refers to a specific doll, the 'tarenja' doll, formerly made for a ritual to obtain rain. This was still done by the Yasin's mother in the 1960's but not so nowadays. Girls and boys having their own tarenja, a big wooden spoon dressed like a bride, went at night from one house to another singing and receiving small gifts of food or money. Then they organized a feast with a religious character. (see Rossie, 1999, *Children's Dolls and Doll Play*, end of chapter 2.12 and 2.13). During the interview the mother explained the use of a spoon as related to its shape making it easy to design a doll's head.
- 3.3. Nor the play events and dialogues, nor the interview with the children reveals any link with non local information (from TV, tourists) available to the players, although Fatiha integrates in her doll play Barbie-like dolls and a Donald Duck doll.
- 3.4. The language style of Fatiha, playing the mother role, is conform the way mothers address their children of about three years and more when they want them to do something. It consists of short demands and orders using a lot of imperatives.
- 3.5. The players' language shows a monolingual situation whereby local Moroccan Arabic is the only language used. Although toddlers of Sidi Ifni already know a few French words like "bonjour", "donne moi un bonbon, un stylo" and even if the mother of Yasin fluently speaks French and his older sisters can express

themselves more or less in that language, there is no indication of the influence of a foreign language or of Teshelhit.

3.6. The doll's names Fatiha mentions at the end of the interview only refer to traditional women's names like Zohra, Khadija, Rquia, Fadma, Fatima, Yasmina.

3.7. However, the monoculture aspect of this doll play is broken down by the appearance of two Barbie-like dolls the mother bought at the market of the summer 'moussem' or big feast of Sidi Ifni. These Barbie-like dolls do not play a special role, they just are 'children' like the self-made dolls. There also is a Donald Duck doll. The play activity shows no reference to this Donald Duck but during the interview Fatiha says it is the schoolteacher. When Boubaker asks her why this doll is the teacher, she answers, "because it is a man".

**Video 2: doll play by three girls, Awatif, seven years, Jalila, nine years, and Malika, nine years, Sidi Ifni, 40 min.**

3.8. The doll play seen on this video is a combination of tradition, imported practices and recent technology.

3.9. In relation to Awatif and Jalila one can, particularly on the level of material items and information gathering, speak of an acculturation to Western European ways of life. Yet, in these children's socialization, especially discipline, a more traditional attitude prevails whereby the authority of parents and older people should not be overtly questioned. In this household Moroccan Arabic is spoken but French is also heard and spoken. Probably the most important way through which Malika, living in a more traditional popular class family, is involved in a multicultural environment comes from her contacts with the two middle class sisters and their play environment located besides the small hotel-restaurant. When the friendship between Malika and the sisters would come to an end, she would be cut off from this contact with a more Western directed middle class lifestyle of which she is integrating several attitudes and behaviours.

3.10. The partial cultural conformity of the play activities in this video is attested by its reference to several traditional practices and institutions:

- the role of the mother in the household, prepare the 'children' to go to school, see they eat and sleep, just as in the first video;
- some habits automatically enter the doll play, e.g. taking of ones slippers when entering the 'room' figured by a carpet;
- the role of the school, but now the reference to the teaching situation and the teacher is more developed;
- the reference to the custom of family reunion on the occasion of the aïd el kebir, the sacrifice feast; as indicated in the following dialogue 19 started by Malika saying "everything fine, how are you with the heat?", Awatif answers "it's fine", Malika "how are the children, tell them that I shall come for the aïd el kebir", Awatif "all right", Jalila interrupts the dialogue saying "we all will come, not only you", then Malika says to Awatif "it is to say, we will come, did you hear?", Awatif "yes".
- the dialogues between the players are directly linked to a traditional mother-child discourse based on straightforward demands and orders but Awatif and especially Jalila show independent behaviour and verbal opposition.

3.11. Cultural change is also attested when the players:

- use real Barbie dolls and soft toy-animals;
- refer to the custom of celebrating birthday, something that is not done in popular families even today;

- refer to going in vacation possibly by airplane;
  - refer to a money order, dialogue Malika with Jalila “I am just waiting for a money order to come”, Jalila “what kind of a money order”, Malika “keep quiet (3x), don’t you know about a money order?” (dialogue 25);
  - use fake Euro banknotes;
  - relate to new technologies such as mobile phoning and video recording;
  - refer to migration, dialogue 26: Malika to Jalila “where (are you), you are going to Spain?”, Jalila (ironically) “you are going to Spain, that’s none of your business!”, Malika “you are going as a clandestine or what?”, Jalila (ironically) “I shall go by airplane, I”;
  - use Algerian raï-music and other modern Arabic music heard from a music player in the base of a Barbie doll;
- 3.12. In relation to the linguistic aspects I noticed that the two sisters only speak Moroccan Arabic during this play activity. So there is no indication of their multilingual situation. On the contrary Malika, who speaks Teshelhit at home, continuously speaks Moroccan Arabic during the whole doll play. Moreover she sings once “happy birthday to you” in English and this shortly after she did the same in Arabic.
- 3.13. Still, the Moroccan Arabic used by Malika shows that her mother tongue is Teshelhit. This is revealed by the grammatical construction of some verbs (“sir èta”, go you, “sir” is Arabic and “èta” is Teshelhit, in Arabic this should be “sir nti”), in the way certain words are pronounced and in intonation.
- 3.14. The players use some stereotyped formulas:
- Awatif says after a dialogue in which she expresses her displeasure of being excluded from the play action “may God stop you”;
  - Jalila uses “tbaraka Allah” to express admiration (scene 11);
  - Jalila reacts to Malika saying “may God beware us (from this foolishness)” (dialogue 7);
  - Malika says “may God give you...” (bad things), this is said when something goes wrong as in this case when the ‘telephone communication’ is broken of (dialogue 19);
  - Malika says “go, that God curses you”, when phoning to Jalila but in relation to an imaginary person who has not arranged the asked for travel tickets;
  - Awatif says to Malika “hello, give me Jalila”, Malika replies “all right, she is here, so speak to your aunt Aïcha, derrèta”, ‘derrèta’ is a Teshelhit word also used in Moroccan Arabic to address an offensive joke to someone (dialogue 20).
- 3.15. When asked the players give their dolls a name. Out of the seven names only one is a traditional Moroccan name, Zohra. The other names are Maria-Celestine, Maria-Julia, Juana, Sylvester, Squir and Jean-Pierre. Except the last name the other ones are inspired by TV programs.

**Video 3: doll play and construction play by Halima, a six-year-old girl, and Fadil, a nine-year-old boy, isolated house at Lagzira, 43 min.**

3.16. The socio-cultural environment of these Amazigh-speaking children is much closer to a monoculture environment than to a multicultural one. Yet, the influence of the school with its education in Moroccan Arabic and the indirect and sometimes direct influence of nearby in mobile homes living tourists break this monoculture situation. Nevertheless, I did find no indication of these external influences in their recorded play.

- 3.17. That a nine-year-old boy participates in the doll play is according to my information from other rural regions not so common but it can easily be explained by the isolation in which these children live only having each other as playmate. Moreover, his doll play activities are limited to driving around the marriage car and putting the guests on a carpet (rag) so that they will have dinner. In the construction play Fadil takes the male role of mason using his younger sister as helper.
- 3.18. The cultural conformity of the play activities is also attested by the reference to several traditional practices and institutions:
- the reference to an Amazigh marriage;
  - the taking away of the bride from her home and bringing her to the home of the bridegroom;
  - in one of the rooms the bride and bridegroom are sitting on the bed, whereby according to custom the bride is placed in the corner;
  - organizing a wedding dinner for both families and their guests.
- 3.19. Both players, however, take some liberty with tradition as when they put the bride doll and the bridegroom doll together in the same car when bringing the bride to the bridegroom's house, something that is never done in reality.
- 3.20. The used objects, such as the marriage cars represented by sardine tins, and the self-made toys, such as the small houses made with mud and stones, belong to a traditional children's culture.
- 3.21. The play activities show the limitation of the players' information to local sources available in a rural environment and there is no indication of the possible influence of the nearby staying tourists.
- 3.22. The language used by the two players shows a monolingual situation whereby Teshelhit is the only used language. Yet, the too limited dialogues, caused by my presence and that of the girl's teacher, do not permit a good analysis of the verbal component.
- 3.23. During the interview the two players say they normally sing several songs when driving the bride, the bridegroom and their parents, and when playing the wedding festivities. All the mentioned songs are Teshelhit songs.
- 3.24. Although the play activities closely reflect a traditional monoculture way of life, these children also show their interest in new technology, e.g. mobile phones, as I have found in one of the miniature houses part of an old phone figuring a mobile phone.

#### **4. INDIVIDUAL ASPECTS**

**Video 1: doll play by Yasin, a four-year-old boy, and Fatiha, a seven-year-old girl, Sidi Ifni, 26 min.**

- 4.1. Gender identity:
- Fatiha shows a clear female identity in her doll play, but she steps across the male-female difference in relation to Yasin;
  - to the contrary, Yasin, as young as he is, strongly attests his right to be seen as a man;
  - for the moment this could be interpreted as an early strong male identity development.
- 4.2. As well the boy as the girl remain consistent in their attitudes and pursue their own line of action.

- 4.3. The emotional concern of the players as expressed in their play is related to the home, the mother-child relationship, the school, it is to say to the actual reality in which they live. For Yasin there is also the emotional concern of defending his male identity.
- 4.4. As well Fatiha as Yasin use a lot of non-verbal behaviour and dialogues to express their thoughts and attitudes, this way showing a well developed mastery of the means of expression available to children in their community.
- 4.5. Fatiha shows much creativity by inventing on the spot a 'big sister' to overcome Yasin's refusal to make a dinner and she repeats this trick a bit later.

**Video 2: doll play by three girls, Awatif, seven years, Jalila, nine years and Malika, nine years, Sidi Ifni, 40 min.**

- 4.6. The three girls show a well interiorised female identity and remain consistent in their play roles.
- 4.7. They show in their personality as well elements from the traditional local way of life, from the modern local way of life, and from an occidental way of life. The elements of an occidental way of life are mostly linked to material items.
- 4.8. Jalila and Awatif show their cultural and social openness by accepting Malika as a regular play partner.
- 4.9. Boubaker Daoumani, the collaborating primary school teacher whose mother tongue is Teshelhit, remarks that the language used by Malika is more adult like than the one of the two sisters.
- 4.10. The behaviour and language of Malika reflect a greater attachment to tradition, e.g. by proposing a traditional name for an invented personage (dialogue 20: Malika "all right, she is here, so speak to your aunt Aïcha", a name immediately changed by Jalila into a modern name when she says "my aunt Lubna not Aïcha").
- 4.11. But Malika shows at the same time a remarkable cultural adaptability by participating with great ease in a strongly Western influenced doll play with mostly imported store-bought toys. Still, a difference between Malika and the other two players is visible in the ease of using a mobile phone, especially in the beginning of the doll play.
- 4.12. In their game the three girls do not use the Barbie dolls as exponents of an American-European adolescent or young adult behaviour but as 'children' in a mother-child relationship. Thus the emotional concern of the players is not related to their wishful future role as adolescents or young female adults but to the daily reality of middle class children and their families.
- 4.13. This doll play offers several examples of the players' creativity: by using the lower part of a Barbie doll as well as a moving music player, a drinking cup, and a video camera, by using the different parts of the play area for different play settings, by introducing the role of video maker, by introducing a variety of play themes (home, school, shopping, birthday feast, going on vacation, creation of external personages).

**Video 3: doll play and construction play by Halima, a six-year-old girl, and Fadil, a nine-year-old boy, isolated house at Lagzira, 43 min.**

- 4.14. Gender identity is less strictly attested here than in the other two videos, Fadil participating in the doll play, a girls' game, and Halima serving as helper in the construction play, a boys' game. As said, this is eventually due to the isolation of

this family whereby Fadil and Halima only have each other as playmates. Another reason probably is that such a playful trespassing of the borderline between female and male duties is culturally accepted for children of this age.

- 4.15. Both players show a good knowledge of the local customs related to marriage and house building.
- 4.16. The emotional concern of the players as expressed in their play is related to these two real world activities but, in contrast with the situation in the two foregoing videos, their interest is not directed towards the actual reality but towards the future reality of adult responsibilities.
- 4.17. Due to the presence of a foreign researcher and a local teacher, both players show shyness and timidity especially on the level of talking and singing, something they normally do in such games. Specific creative expressions are not available neither.

## **5. MATERIAL ASPECTS**

### **Video 1: doll play by Yasin, a four-year-old boy, and Fatiha, a seven-year-old girl, Sidi Ifni, 26 min.**

- 5.1. The street is the normal place to play for city children of about three years onwards and living in popular quarters.
- 5.2. The play setting is limited to one area, a carpet laid on the foot-path, and there is no use of items from this setting, except in the following situation.
- 5.3. The school as location is materialized by the house wall.
- 5.4. Fatiha makes several dolls of the traditional type with a cross-shaped wooden frame covered by rags, and for her first doll she uses a spoon. Yasin clumsily and reluctantly tries to make a traditional doll.
- 5.5. Two cheap shop-bought China made Barbie-like dolls and a Donald Duck are also used.
- 5.6. This combination of self-made and store-bought toys reflects the multicultural situation of Moroccan city children of whatever social class.
- 5.7. My information on and observation of Moroccan city girls have, until this doll play, attested that these girls do not make themselves dolls anymore. Yet, it is shown here that there are exceptions to this general rule and this exception is not caused by a recent village to city migration.
- 5.8. Both the self-made as the shop-bought dolls are indistinctly used as 'children'.
- 5.9. Fatiha once indicates a doll as the 'bride', and twice as 'the older sister'.
- 5.10. Sometimes it is Fatiha who is the 'mother', but occasionally it is also a doll.
- 5.11. When interviewed, Fatiha says that the Donald Duck is the school teacher and this because she designates it as being a man.

### **Video 2: doll play by three girls, Awatif, seven years, Jalila, nine years and Malika, nine years, Sidi Ifni, 40 min.**

- 5.12. The play setting is totally new for the players who divided it in distinct play areas: the home, the school, the other outdoor places. Such doll play normally takes place at the home of the two sisters.
- 5.13. No self-made toys are used here.
- 5.14. The three girls use different kinds of store-bought dolls and figurines almost always representing children:

- original Barbie dolls,
  - a baby-like doll,
  - teddies and soft toy-animals,
  - plastic toy-animals with a human appearance,
  - very small figurines.
- 5.15. Toys related to home and household are available and used according to their normal meaning:
- different kinds of toy-utensils,
  - bags, handbags, sacs, backpack, suitcase,
  - beauty set, and also real earrings,
  - toy-keys,
  - toy-telephones,
  - set of fake Euro banknotes.
- 5.16. Musical toys are also used:
- a small wind up music box;
  - the lower moving and music playing part of a Barbie doll.
- 5.17. Furniture belonging to the hotel-restaurant is integrated in the doll play:
- a carpet delimitating the home,
  - little chairs,
  - wooden frames normally serving as banks,
  - plastic terrace tables and chairs.
- 5.18. Some objects are transformed into one or multiple toys:
- Jalila takes a hairclip out of Malika's hair and uses it as clothes pin,
  - the conically shaped moving lower part of the Hawaiian Barbie doll is first used as a dinking cup, then as music box and finally as video camera.
- 5.19. The large amount and diversity of the toys and play objects available to the players reveals the standard of living and the multicultural situation of Awatif and Jalila, the owners of these items. One doll, a Barbie dressed and moving as a Hawaiian female dancer, shows a remarkable cultural complexity as the performed music consists of Algerian raï and other modern Arabic music.

**Video 3: doll play and construction play by Halima, a six-year-old girl, and Fadil, a nine-year-old boy, isolated house at Lagzira, 43 min.**

- 5.20. The free area near the house is a normal place to play for young village children.
- 5.21. The play setting is divided in different areas: the homes, the threshing floor with the mill, the road, the area where mud is taken.
- 5.22. The players only use self-made toys and objects found in and around the play setting:
- miniature houses constructed with mud and stones,
  - marriage car represented by sardine tins,
  - the bed made with a flat stone enveloped in a white rag,
  - snail shells used as dolls, in the case of the bride and bridegroom the shell is enveloped with a white rag otherwise they represent the parents, brothers (small shells), other family members and the guests; I have never observed the use of snail shells as dolls before this occasion and it is not mentioned in the consulted literature;
  - the cover of an old phone lying in one of the miniature houses represents a mobile phone.

- 5.23. The material aspects of these children's play reflect a traditional play culture and their life in a family with little or no means for buying non essential things.
- 5.24. With the exception of the toy-mobile phone, there is no reference to a multicultural influence.

## **6. CONCLUSION: GENERAL REMARKS AND HYPOTHESES**

These general remarks and hypotheses are about the play of Moroccan children living in so-called popular class and middle class families as I did not gather information on the play of higher-class children. My data also refer more to rural areas, as well villages as small towns, than to larger cities although I also gathered information in popular quarters of Kenitra and Marrakech. So, when I speak about 'Moroccan' children these restrictions must be kept in mind. A first series of statements refers to the possible relationship between Moroccan children's pretend play and the social and cultural context in which they live. The second series of statements refers more to the players' individuality and the third series of statements concerns the material aspects of their play. The general remarks and hypotheses presented below are based on the detailed analysis of the three videos on children's doll and construction play made in and near Sidi Ifni but they are also suggested and supported by the data gathered in My earlier research. Still, one should never forget that all this is based on a limited and non-representative sample. The data recorded on the videos refer to strictly dated play activities, namely the beginning of 2002. The data gathered before that also have a historical dimension as they refer as well to recent play activities as to play activities and toys of nowadays children and of Moroccans who where a child between the 1940s and the 1980s.

### **6.1. The relationship between pretend play and socio-cultural aspects**

1. Moroccan children's playgroups are mostly stable playgroups, the players often being related by kinship and/or living in each other vicinity. Regular participation in a playgroup based on friendship ties with non family members or with further away living children occurs but seems to be seldom especially in playgroups of younger children up to about ten years of age.
2. The three videos do not show examples of solitary play but play relations between two or three children. However one sees now and then parallel play instead of collaborative play. The fourth video I made in Sidi Ifni is about the solitary play of a ten-year-old boy making different types of toys to give them to his younger brother. Based on my earlier observations showing even two or three-year-old children playing alone, I can say that solitary play is less seldom than one might think would happen in communities that are easily classified as closer to the collectivistic pole than to the individualistic pole.
3. The general rule in Morocco is that adults do not interfere in children's play except when they are too disturbed by it, need some help or when the play situation runs out of hand more or less seriously. As one mother clearly states, children's play is seen as positive for their personal and social development but it is also seen as an exclusive children's activity so adults rarely play with children of preschool and older age. Yet older children do play with younger ones.
4. This customary non-interference of adults in children's play makes that Moroccan children already from the age of three years often enjoy a lot of



freedom when playing. Of course this freedom to play and to make toys is limited by the time boys and girls have to do so. In relation to the available play time there is no doubt that girls of six year and more must help their mother and other family members a lot more than boys. Somewhat older boys can also go further away from their home than girls can.

5. A direct correlation exists between the availability of multicultural influences in a household and the multicultural characteristics of its children's play activities and toys.
6. However, exceptions to this obvious correlation exist as in the case of the remarkable adaptation of an Amazigh girl from a more traditional popular class family to the play activities of two sisters from a highly multicultural middle class family. It remains to be seen if this is a real exception or a more common event.
7. The main concerns of the players' community seem to be expressed in its children's pretend play. In the first two videos this is the home and school situation of the players seen from a mother's perspective. In the third video the concern is about future adult responsibility, namely marriage and house construction. This difference should not be generalised however, as the city girl who makes dolls herself said that she sometimes plays at the wedding of one of her doll. The three girls playing on the flat roof of a hotel-restaurant also express new concerns, such as going on vacation and illegal emigration.
8. In the two instances where the doll play integrates a mother-child relationship, the girl performing the mother role conforms herself to the customary behaviour of a mother in her community. This is expressed as well in the play themes as in the used language. I am therefore inclined to postulate that an eventual multicultural and westernised situation of the concerned players has little influence on their playful acting out of this fundamental mother-child relationship. On the contrary the same circumstances have a great influence on their use of play objects, toys and ways of communication.
9. Moroccan middle class children combine in their play activities a 'traditional' and 'modern' behaviour, type of language and use of play objects reflecting on the one hand a more traditional way of life and on the other hand a modern consumptive way of life. As seen in the second video this combination can go on very smoothly.
10. Contrary to what one might expect, the girl belonging to a popular class family and speaking a devalorised language at home plays the leading role in a playgroup that moves about in a middle class and Western oriented setting. Although my first reaction was to link the to this girls' personality, I suppose that factors due to the play content are more important here.
11. The availability of limited or ample sources of information and of modern means of communication, such as satellite TV, computer and Internet, influences children's pretend play by stimulating the working out of non-traditional play themes and the use of new play objects and toys. They also influence the verbal component.
12. In relation to this verbal component of the video recorded play activities it seems that in a bilingual situation, with the children speaking Teshelhit and Moroccan Arabic or Moroccan Arabic and French, this linguistic knowledge doesn't has much influence on the children's dialogues. However, there is the remarkable exception offered by the girl speaking Teshelhit at home but using

- Moroccan Arabic with her middle class playmates. She even uses once an English expression when singing “happy birthday to you”.
13. This specific situation brings me to postulate that children in a linguistic minority position wanting to play with children speaking the dominant language can only succeed if they are able and accept to speak this dominant language.
  14. Based on the presented videos and on data gathered since 1992, I hypothesize that Moroccan children’s play and toys, except maybe that of upper class children, relates to real world experiences as I haven’t found Yet indications that relate these children’s play activities and toys to imaginary worlds.
  15. The recent videos and my earlier data make it possible to put forward that Moroccan children from families with a low income and/or from families that are closer to the traditional way of life also perform complex and sophisticated play events.
  16. Each one of the videotaped play activities shows that these children’s play interactions are not always harmonious, co-operative and conflict-free. Instead opposition, confrontation, conflicting viewpoints and play plans do occur. These events, however, seem to be quickly resolved through strategies of disengagement, giving in and subtle rebuking. In any case I didn’t find examples of real verbal or physical aggression or of a player leaving the play activity in anger. According to me, the way in which the players handle opposition and conflict can be related to the way this is done in their community where direct confrontation between family members and friends should be avoided.

## **6.2. The relationship between pretend play and individual aspects**

The following general remarks and hypotheses refer more to certain aspects of the players' personality than to socio-cultural environments, therefore I assembled them here.

17. Most of the non-verbal and verbal behaviour of the players in the three videos is, according to my interpretation, characterised by a person to person behaviour and not by a person-to-group behaviour as is sometimes said to be the case with children from non-Western popular class families. Of course the fact that there are only two or three players probably furthers person-to-person play behaviour.
18. The players, certainly those of the first two videos, do not perform imitative behaviour only. They also show examples of inventiveness for example when a girl invents an imaginary person to rebuke her younger playmate.
19. An unequal status of the players is prevalent in these videotaped play activities. This difference in status is as far as I can analyse based on difference in age or in experience but also relates to the given roles and play themes. This difference in status is certainly also related to the players’ personality but my information does not permit me to attest this.
20. My analysis of the concerned videos has not brought forward examples of players using their play activity to solve eventual emotional and interpersonal problems and conflicts. A lot more video recordings of the same and other Moroccan children will be needed before something adequate can be said about this.

21. A strong personal statement of gender identity occurs in the first video and this by a four year and two-months-old boy. This is at a younger age than I thought normally would happen in Morocco and than was said to me by several local informants. Further gender directed research in play and real world situations of Moroccan children of the same age and of a younger and an older age is undoubtedly needed to be able to clarify this point.

### **6.3. The relationship between pretend play and its material aspects**

The material aspects of children's play activities, such as the play settings, the play objects and the toys, permit to formulate some other general statements and hypotheses.

22. The fact that children make toys themselves can in Morocco serve as an adequate indicator for a play and life situation closer to a so-called traditional pole, whereas playing with bought toys often refers to a play and life situation with more external influences, in this case the indirect or direct influence of a Western consumer oriented way of life.
23. Moroccan countryside children mostly create their toys themselves and use play objects from their natural and domestic environment. Moroccan city children mostly use shop-bought toys supplemented with objects found in their home.
24. When children make themselves toys this offers some advantages for their development, like learning about material and its eventual use, developing technical abilities, training patience and perseverance. Therefore I postulate that when children don't create toys anymore this can be seen as a developmental disadvantage and when their family only can afford cheap toys, these toys may become dangerous as such cheap toys aren't made according to strict security rules.
25. I want to stress that the playing children seen in the videos don't use just anything they have at their disposal, something that is easily said of such children. Looking at the way snail shells are chosen to be dolls, it is sure this is not done because these children cannot make traditional Moroccan dolls with a cross-shaped structure in reed or sticks. Instead it occurs to me that they purposely and adequately choose these shells because they are small enough to fit in the miniature houses, because the players deliberately use the opening of the shell to represent the doll's head, and because the roundness of the shell represents the local beauty canon of the female body, a beauty canon that favours round forms and regards thinness as a sign of poverty, illness or problems.
26. As a hypothesis I would therefore state that the children's use of objects in play activities, limited of course by their availability, is determined by the child's view of the representational meaning and the practical utility of these objects. Some examples of the use of specific material for specific purposes to make dolls, gathered in my earlier research in Morocco, confirm this point of view.
27. The original or imitation Barbie dolls used in the first two videos represent children not female adolescents or young adults. The girl making dolls herself but also having two Barbie-like dolls said later on that she sometimes uses one of these Barbie-like dolls as a mother figure. Based on this and other

information I would postulate that Moroccan children adapt foreign toys to the norms and viewpoints of their own community.

28. New technological items seem to fascinate Moroccan children, not only children living in cities but also those living in the countryside. This is exemplified in the second and third video by an imitation of the mobile phone, and by several other toys referring to modern technology, such as cars, motor's and telephones, made by Moroccan children of the communities I have visited before.

In a paper distributed during the symposium "Studying Children's Play, Development and Education in Bicultural Contexts", the organizer of this symposium, Artin Göncü, concluded his talk on "Interpreting Children's Play as Cultural Activity" with the following four statements:

1. Children's play is influenced by the material and meaning context of their communities in complex ways.
2. Low-income and non-Western children engage in a wide variety of play, reflecting their cultural heritage.
3. Low-income children's play occurs with child and adult partners in different contexts of activity.
4. Understanding the connection between community structures and children's play requires taking an emic stance.

The analysis of the videos and the information I gathered on Moroccan children's play and toys confirm these viewpoints. The only limitation I need to mention is about the third point as the necessary data in relation to adult play partners of Moroccan children from low-income families are lacking. I think this lack is due to the fact that adults only rarely play with children older than three. However, special attention to and research on adult partners in Moroccan children's play and toy making activities is needed before being able to conclude.

The very limited sample of video recorded play of children living in quite distinct socio-cultural environments in the Sidi Ifni region certainly offers relevant information. At the same time it is strictly necessary that the proposed general remarks and hypotheses should be better documented and more thoroughly analysed before they can be validated or invalidated.

## NOTES

- (1) The analysed ethnographic, linguistic and other literature can be found in my book *Saharan and North African Ludic Heritages. Commented Bibliography on Play, Games and Toys*.
- (2) My fieldwork and research till 1992 has been financed by the Belgian National Foundation for Scientific Research, Brussels.
- (3) In 1975 I had the opportunity to go to the Arbeitsstelle für Humanethologie of the Max Planck Institut für Verhaltenswissenschaft in Percha bei Starnberg (Germany), where Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt introduced me to human ethological research and lend me the necessary film equipment. The filming among the Ghrib resulted in a 16 mm black and white film of about one hour on relations between children and between adults and children filmed according to the human

ethological and ethnographical method (1975) and an ethnographic 16mm colour film on the making of a doll by a girl (1975). I have given these unpublished films to the archives of the Stockholm International Toy Research Center (SITREC). There also exists a published video on the making of Moroccan dolls: Rossie Jean-Pierre, Rossie Souad, Björn Sterner, 1998, *Homemade Dolls from Morocco*, Nordic Center for Research on Toys and Educational Media, 18 minutes. In relation to the exposition "Modesties Exotiques" in the Musée des Arts Modestes, Sète (France), December-February 2001-2002, a video of 30 minutes has been made on my collection of dolls made by Moroccan girls of the Atlas mountains and the Pre-Sahara.

- (4) See the chapters "Toys, Play, Signs, Meanings and Communication" in my book *Toys, Play, Culture and Society. An Anthropological Approach with Reference to North Africa and the Sahara* (2003) and "Socio-Semiotic Analysis" in my book *Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures. The Animal in Play, Games and Toys* (2003).
- (5) The major publications resulting from my research can be consulted on SITREC's website: <http://www.sitrec.kth.se>
- (6) Due to the pejorative meaning of 'Berber', related to the word barbarian, the concerned North African cultural movements put forward the local term 'Amazigh' to refer to the culture and language of the North African and Saharan populations that lived in these areas before the coming of the Arabs and still speak their own language.
- (7) The numbers of the scenes and dialogues refer to the detailed description of the concerned video given in the appendix.

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## APPENDIX

### VIDEO 1 – DOLL PLAY AND CONSTRUCTION PLAY

**Sidi Ifni**, Morocco, **31.01.2002**, 19 minutes of play activities

Followed by 26 minutes interview with the players and a mother by Boubaker Daoumani

Video recorder Jean-Pierre Rossie

#### **Players:**

Fatiha, girl, 7 years, first year of primary school, speaks Moroccan Arabic at home

Yasin Shmèllal, boy, 4 years 2 months, maternal cousin of Fatiha, speaks Moroccan Arabic at home

#### **Language:**

Both players use local Moroccan Arabic

Translation of dialogues first in French by B. Daoumani and JP. Rossie

Translation of French into English by JP. Rossie

#### **Place of action:**

Small rural city Sidi Ifni, Atlantic coast, Southern Morocco, Avenue Prince Moulay Abdallah, in front of house number 28, the home of Yasin, this street lies parallel with the seashore and a camping with several mobile homes.

#### **Scenes and dialogues used for Chicago symposium paper**

0. View of the environment and play area with the players.

1. Fatiha (F) makes a doll with a wooden spoon (0'55").

2. Yasin (Y) clumsily does as if he makes a doll (the older sisters of Y who are out of the image tell him that he must make a doll).

3. F designs a face on the inner side of the spoon.

4. takes a pencil and makes a trait on his stick.

5. Y must hold F's doll so that she can attach a belt to it (3'50").

6. Two Barbie-like dolls lean against the wall.

7. Y hits the ground with a stick (5'10")

*Dialogue 1:* F to Y "make the house", Y replies "but wait, wait".

8. Then he uses the same stick and another one as if he wants to make a cross shaped doll's structure (†) meanwhile he sits with his back towards F and the play setting.

9. Y throws the sticks aside and continues to sit with his back to F and the play activity.

10. Y does nothing for a while sitting with an annoyed face.

11. F starts to make the † for another doll.

12. Y takes a stick and makes a rectangular structure with 4 sticks he takes from F (7'10").

13. Y takes a little ball in his hands for a moment.

14. Y takes a cloth and puts it in the rectangular he made.

15. F makes another †



- Dialogue 2:* F to Y “see there the children near her (the spoon doll)” “go and make them a midday dinner” (3x).
16. Y takes two little sticks, holds them as if he wants to make a †, takes a white rag, then drops all this (8’40”).
- Dialogue 3:* Y to F “where is the tajine (the pottery cooking pot)?”.
17. Y finally puts the two little sticks with the rectangular frame
- Dialogue 4:* F to Y “go to make the dinner”.
- Y replies “where is the dinner?”.
18. Y wobbles on his knees and then takes a white rag and two sticks acting as if he wants to make a †.
19. F puts her little doll next to the spoon doll and Barbie-like dolls
- Dialogue 5:* F to Y “go to make it”, Y replies “I don’t have a dinner”.
20. Y drops the sticks and white rag, then he takes only the two little sticks in his hand
- Dialogue 6:* F to Y “go to make it”, Y replies “I don’t have the dinner, I”, F replies “go to make it”, Y replies “I don’t have the dinner, I”.
21. F takes the white rag Y was using and covers the dolls with it
- Dialogue 7:* F to Y “go to cover them”.
- Dialogue 8:* F to Y “give me the sticks”.
22. Y gives F the sticks, she starts to make another doll
- Dialogue 9:* F to Y “go first to make the kitchen for us, go... but you are going to make the kitchen!” (tone is rising).
23. Y turns with his finger in his nose doing nothing for the rest (10’45”)
- Dialogue 10:* F to Y “and go to make the dinner”.
24. F takes a ribbon lying near Y
- Dialogue 11:* Y to F “where is the kitchen, there is no kitchen» Finally Y takes the scissors in hand pushing and hitting things with it, he takes a stick and tries to make a hole in it with the scissors.
- Dialogue 12:* F to Y “so, make it with this, see here, see here... make the dinner and the rest” (said with emphasis).
25. Y slightly turns his head from right to left (negative reply).
26. F is making the † of a new doll.
27. Y continues to manipulate without much purpose the scissors
- Dialogue 13:* Y to F “where is it (the dinner)?”.
28. F makes a gesture of impatience
- Dialogue 14:* F to Y “where is it?!” “give me, give me and go to make the ‘dwâz’ (plate) and the dinner and the lemonade”, Y replies “where is the dinner? There is no dinner!”.
29. F designs a face on her new doll, then gives it a dress
- Dialogue 15:* F to Y “see here the bride again, see there the girl of the bride (arûsa)”.
30. F takes some dolls in her lap
- Dialogue 16:* F “see here the dinner, wake up”. Y replies “where is the dinner, I don’t see it”.
- Dialogue 17:* F “take your breakfast”.
31. F looks at Y.
32. F searches something and says to Y
- Dialogue 18:* “go to prepare” (13’35”), Y replies “am I your sister?”, F replies “don’t forget what you have said”.
33. F makes another doll (15’25”)

- Dialogue 19:* F to Y “give me something”.
34. Y throws his ribbon and then another rag to F with a slightly aggressive gesture  
*Dialogue 20:* F to Y “go to prepare them the dinner (3x), Y replies “go yourself! I am a man not a woman! I, I am a man not a woman”.
35. Y plays for a while with the scissors  
*Dialogue 21:* F to Y “but it is necessary to make them a dinner”.
36. F continues to make a doll  
*Dialogue 22:* F “they will soon wake up, eight o’clock is approaching so that they will go to school”. F to Y “go and make them breakfast”. Y replies “tell me, they are going to the school?”, F replies “Yes, they enter school at eight o’clock”.
37. Y still plays with the scissors  
*Dialogue 23:* F “and eight o’clock is approaching, go to make them breakfast”, Y replies “go yourself! Am I a woman!”.
38. F designs a face on the doll  
*Dialogue 24:* F “their big sister has gone to make them a breakfast, she doesn’t care about you”.
39. Just then Y drops the scissors and takes a stone and a little stick  
*Dialogue 25:* Y to F “see here the breakfast, see it here, see here the breakfast (2x), F replies “where is it?”, Y replies “here it is”, F to Y “give me the rag”, Y replies “where is it”.  
*Dialogue 26:* F to Y “like this one, give”.
40. F throws a rag to Y.
41. Y opens the rag and gives it to F (16’50”).
42. F uses it to make a dress for her new doll.
43. Y wobbles again on his knees (17’)  
*Dialogue 27:* F to Y “go to make something”, Y replies “where is the thing, I haven’t seen it”.
44. Y takes the little ball lying against the wall  
*Dialogue 28:* F to Y “go to make them the ‘dwâz’ (plate) and something, go!”
45. Y gives two small white things to F  
*Dialogue 29:* F to Y “go to make them the plate and the breakfast.
46. Y manipulates the ball for a longer time in a seemingly annoyed way  
*Dialogue 30:* F “they have gone to school”.
47. F makes a doll  
*Dialogue 31:* F “they did not come back yet, go make us breakfast! (an order)”, Y replies but his reply is inaudible.  
*Dialogue 32:* F to Y “and so, you have to make the breakfast and the plate. See, their big sister has gone to make the plate. She doesn’t care about you”.
48. F puts this doll with the other dolls against the wall (18’10”)  
*Dialogue 33:* F “see, she is there, wake up! See there, they did wake up”.
49. F takes the spoon doll on her lap.
50. F takes the small dolls in her hand and lays them against the wall  
*Dialogue 34:* F “see them, they are going to school, they. See them, she has brought them (2x)”.
51. Y plays with the ball and says  
*Dialogue 35:* Y to F “is this the school?”
52. F puts the spoon doll on the rag on the rectangular structure.
53. F blows as if she indicates that it is enough  
*Dialogue 36:* F to Y “go and take them to the room (possibly the school) (2x).
54. Y wants to cover the doll with the lower part of the rag.

55. But F puts first a second doll under the rag  
*Dialogue 37: F to Y “go to take them back from school (2x).*
56. Y covers these dolls  
*Dialogue 38: F to Y “go bring them breakfast at school. Go, to make them breakfast and something else”.*

## **VIDEO 2 – DOLL PLAY**

**Sidi Ifni, Morocco, 10.02.2002**, 39 minutes of play activities

Followed by 6 minutes interview with the players by Boubaker Daoumani, interview continued on audio recorder

Video recorder Jean-Pierre Rossie

### **Players:**

Awatif Atbib, girl, 7 years 4 months, primary school, speaks Moroccan Arabic at home

Jalila Atbib, girl, 9 years 3 months, sister of Awatif, primary school, speaks Moroccan Arabic at home

Malika, girl, 9 years, primary school, friend of the other two players, speaks Teshelhit at home and also Moroccan Arabic

### **Language:**

The players use local Moroccan Arabic

Translation of dialogues first in French by B. Daoumani and JP. Rossie

Translation of French into English by JP. Rossie

### **Place of action:**

Small rural city Sidi Ifni, Atlantic coast, Southern Morocco, on the flat roof serving as terrace of the hotel-restaurant Suerte Loco, owned and run by the Awatif's and Jalila's mother's family, located near the seashore and a camping with several mobile homes.

### **Scenes and dialogues used for Chicago symposium paper**

0. View of the environment and play area with the players
1. Awatif (A) starts the detached moving part of a Barbie doll that at the same time plays music, e.g. Algerian raï music and other modern Arabic music (03').
2. Malika (M) speaks to A  
*Dialogue 1: “Eh crazy girl, come here you, I shall speak to you, come”.*
3. A enters the ‘room’, walks towards Malika and Jalila and replies  
*Dialogue 2: “Hello, Hello”.*
4. M takes the mobile phone, hits the telephone number while indicating them aloud “067-176413” (her way of handling the phone shows that M is less used to do this than J and A).  
*Dialogue 3: M to A “you have brought with you what I asked for? Go, go, a little tin of tomatoes is lacking”.*
5. A few seconds later A replies while walking on the terrace and holding a handbag and keys in her hands  
*Dialogue 4: A to M “what shall I bring for you?”, M “you must bring a tin of tomatoes”, A “what do you say?”, M “little tin of tomatoes”, A “I did not hear you”,*

- M “little tin of tomatoes and bring with you also a dirham of yeast”, A closes the dialogue saying “Oh” (in a way that indicates it is too much).
6. M hangs a little bag on the doll by putting the string over its head meanwhile she talks to this ‘child’  
*Dialogue 5:* “you are going to school”, then she says to M “go take them to school, go, go! Well bring them to school”, J “wait, wait, not yet”.
7. A says “srr, srr” as she wants to phone to her sister but J does not reply. A reacts by hitting with the slipper on her foot the foot of J who sits on her knees before the ‘kitchen table’. Meanwhile *dialogue 6* takes place: A says several times “hey, I am calling you”, before J answers “hello, who is talking?” after she has taken up another toy-phone.
8. J has a phone in her hand and talks to M  
*Dialogue 7:* “hello, look you did not take one of them with you, crazy one”, M replies “what? which one of them?” meanwhile she continues to cloth the baby-like doll. J continues “look she is at home”, M “the one who is so small?”, J “yes”, M “this one is still small, that is why I did not take her along”. J “may God beware us (from this foolishness), bring her to the school for the little ones”. M “bring her to me”, J “eh, eh! (a way to express refusal) I am preparing dinner, send the one who is with you”.
9. J arrives at the school area and sits down with a phone in her hand  
*Dialogue 8:* J to A “you know how many did not arrive yet?”, A “and that one, and that one, they should go to school, isn’t it? Those two should go to the school for the little ones, not one?”, J “eh! I did tell you two”.  
 M sits on the bank, she wants to take the phone out of J’s hands while saying “give the mobile phone to talk to this one”, but J takes it back.  
 M pulls J’s arm while getting up and they go three steps together  
*Dialogue 9:* M to J “you will teach them now, you will play the mistress”, J “no, I do not want to”.  
 J stands with her two hands on her hips in front of M and talks to her (10’45”).  
 J walks away as if she is angry and speaks like that. M quickly follows her.  
 J takes some objects and puts these on the little chair serving as kitchen table  
 Meanwhile M puts some toy-utensils on the kitchen table saying  
*Dialogue 10* “oh! what has she been doing to me in the kitchen a second time!” to which  
 J reacts by repeating exactly the same phrase in an ironic way. (11’20”).
10. J takes a Barbie doll lying on the ground and speaks to it while moving her finger before it saying “look you!”.  
*Dialogue 11:* J to A “give me this jar (conical music playing part of a Barbie doll), give, give”,  
 then she takes the moving part of a Barbie doll puts it outside the carpet and makes it play music. When it reaches the wooden frame serving as school, J says to M  
*Dialogue 12:* “give me this one (a doll)” (2x), M replies “no, no, leave this one here, I want to put it on top”.
11. M finally can take of the little bag of the doll, then puts the doll back at the table where she is putting all the dolls. (13’50”).  
 J brings up both her arms and expresses her admiration for M’s arrangement of the dolls by using the stereotyped expression “tbaraka Allah” said when one sees something wonderful but at the same time serving as protection against the evil eye.

*Dialogue 13:* M takes the Hawaiian Barbie saying “see them”. J looks at her and says “and the other one?”, M “its like she stands upright here, that is why I did place her like that”.

12. M puts the other dolls on a second small chair next to the other one. She sings “aïdo milad” (happy birthday). J wants to help but M refuses this. (14’20”). J stops trying to help and looks at the scene with her hands on her hips.

13. Somewhat later M sings in English “happy birthday to you”, “yalala” (15’50”).

14. J is still filming with the moving part of a Barbie figuring a video camera, meanwhile A continues to ly down. M stands up.

*Dialogue 14:* M about A “she will not come to the anniversary, this one”, J to A “hey, hey, wake up you”, M to A “hey, wake up you”, J “this one, sleepiness has overwhelmed her”, M “hey, it is the anniversary, you crazy one”, M “finally I did arrange them, isn’t it”, J “me also”.

15. J now films M (17’50”).

*Dialogue 15:* J “where is your face?”, M “oh my little mother (ih amwemti, an expression used to indicate astonishment), Jalila I want you the camera to see them all, crazy one, sees them all”.

16. J speaks to A who lies on the ground (17’35”).

*Dialogue 16:* J to A “move, so that I can turn this on”, M reacts saying “no, I do not want you to turn this on”, J “no, no, I want”, M interrupts her saying “no, no, leave it”. J insists on doing it.

17. While A is still lying on the ground, M transports the other children to the wooden frame. (19’30”

*Dialogue 17:* M to J “turn it (the music) on when it stops, turn it on, turn it on quickly, quickly, now they will sing”. J now changes the video camera again into a music player, then she moves her body while listening to the music, afterwards she uses it again as video camera.

18. M deals out the Euro banknotes (22’30”).

*Dialogue 18:* M “to the ones who are great we will give three and to those who are not great I shall give only one, one to this one here, one to this one there”. J reacts “eh no!” (she does not want M to separate the banknotes). M whispers “it is on purpose, on purpose”, J “hey no, no on purpose, it is not my problem this on purpose, daughter of shame (bint el hram is an insult), if you cut another banknote I shall show you, we have only brought them (to our house) with great difficulty”. Quickly after this discussion M asks A, who is taking out objects from a bag and putting them on the wooden frame, “where is the comb?”.

19. M and A are phone to one another

*Dialogue 19:* M “tell them that I shall come for the aïd el kebir”, A “OK”, J walks towards M and states “we will all come, not only you!”, M adapts to J’s reaction saying to A “it is to say we will all come, did you here?”, A “yes”, M “oh it is broken of (the communication), may God give you” (bad things, expression used when something is not well or goes wrong).

20. M takes the phone and talks to A, A has another phone and replies to M, J wants to take the phone away from M and after a short dispute she gets it, J then phones to A. (27’). Later on it is M who tries to take the phone from J, J first refuses but then gives in. (33’).

21. *Dialogue 20:* A to M “hello (4x) give me Jalila”, M “OK she is here, take, speak to your aunt Aïcha, derreta” (derreta is an expression for an insulting joke), J “my aunt Lubna (a modern name) not Aïcha (a traditional name)”, A “hello Jalila, my mother has said that you will all come for the aïd el kebir”.

22. M is trying to get the other player's attention for a while  
*Dialogue 21:* A "are you playing with me or what are you doing?", M "wait (3x)", J to A "hello, what do you want?", A "do you play with me?", J "what, what do you want?", A "I am phoning to you since yesterday during the evening and you do not want to listen to me", J "we have been sleeping yesterday evening and we have closed down the mobile phone, we have closed it down", A "OK".
23. *Dialogue 22:* M "listen, we will take them to pass summer (have a vacation) for a while, OK.", J "no, till tomorrow (2x), not now", "but crazy you, now that it is warm, get up, take this", J repeats in an ironical manner "take this".
24. *Dialogue 23:* M "hey you, speak fusha Arabic (standard Arabic)", A "and then", J "no, no, you speak ta'arabt (Arabic influenced by Amazigh, Moroccan Arabic)".
25. *Dialogue 24:* M to J "not yet, I shall send them (the children) to you but I am waiting for a money order to come", J "money order for what?", M "shut up (3x), don't you know the money order?".
26. *Dialogue 25:* J "I shall go out", M "where are you going, where, where?", M "that is none of your business", M "where are you going?", J "I shall go out, is that your business?", M "we will find you in that cafe, OK., with the little ones, OK?".
27. *Dialogue 26:* J "hello", M "where? You will leave for Spain you?", J speaking in an ironical manner "you will leave for Spain you? is that your business?", M "you are going as a clandestine or what?", J continuing in an ironical manner "I shall go by airplane me, give me my red bag", M "give her the red bag, watch it if you stay longer than twenty days once more", J "I shall stay longer than twenty days and I shall visit my friends that's it, I shall stay longer than twenty days, is that your business? It is not for you to command me the whole day".

### VIDEO 3 – DOLL PLAY AND CONSTRUCTION PLAY

**Lagzira area (Sidi Ifni), Morocco, 04.03.2002**, 43 minutes of play activities

Audio recorded interview with the players by Boubaker Daoumani

Video recorder Jean-Pierre Rossie

#### **Players:**

Halima Idehna, girl, 6 years 5 months, primary school, speaks Teshelhit at home

Fadil Idehna, 9 years 4 months, boy, speaks Teshelhit at home

#### **Language:**

The players use Teshelhit exclusively

Translation of dialogues first in French by B. Daoumani and JP. Rossie

Translation of French into English by JP. Rossie

#### **Place of action:**

Isolated house number 87, near the asphalt road in the Lagzira area, 4 km before Sidi Ifni and at the foot of a hill where the small Amazigh village Lahfart is located 2 km up road, Atlantic coast, Southern Morocco, in a free area close to this family's traditional house.

## Scenes and dialogues used for Chicago symposium paper

0. View of the environment and play area with the players
1. Halima (H) and Fadil (F) drive the car, represented by a sardine tin, in which the bride and the bridegroom are sitting clearly tracing the road they are following, meanwhile they now and then sing or make car sounds (3'5").
2. While continuing to drive his car F looks at the camera in a seemingly embarrassed or questioning way (3'35").
3. One of the players' older siblings says to them "but speak, speak louder, speak". H and F look at each other and F says to H "speak you". (6'50").
4. H arrives first with the car at her miniature house and starts to arrange the dolls (8'50"). F is still driving his car. H puts the parents of the bride and bridegroom in their correct position, she also arranges the other dolls with the opening of the shell, representing the head, on top (9'10").
5. H takes a few stones and gives them to F who sits at his miniature house just after stopping to drive his car (10'30").
6. *Dialogue*: F to H "bring some mud, hey you bring some mud, bring that one there, bring", H "what", F "that mud there, bring that mud there", H "what", F "bring that mud there, the mud", H "wait", F bring the mud Halima", H "what", F "bring the mud", F "what", F "bring the mud (2x), bring the mud, hey you! bring the mud (2x), hey Halima bring some mud". Finally, H brings some mud to F (22'25").
7. H and F are continuing to build at their house, F asks H for mud but she does not do it, then F takes some mud away from F, F shows her resentment and F throws some mud back to her (23'46").