

**ISCKMC 2020**  
**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****ARTISTIC SYSTEM OF DAGESTAN CHILDREN'S POETIC  
FOLKLORE**

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**Abstract**

The article considers the comprehensive study of the features of the artistic system of children's poetic folklore of the peoples of Dagestan. Based on the analysis of remarkable samples of lullabies, game poetry, calendar songs which were created thanks to the truly inexhaustible creative forces of the people, the article reveals their deep humanistic and democratic foundation, high ideological orientation and aesthetic perfection of these works. Among the various genre varieties of poetic folklore, lullaby poetry, or “mother poetry”, is the most widespread. The article focuses on its ideological, thematic and artistic content, and identifies archaic elements. Lullabies are divided into the following groups taking into account the age categories of children and with a gender purpose: 1) songs for the smallest; 2) songs for boys; 3) songs for girls. The article reveals the artistic specificity of each of the presented groups. The author analyzes the poetic imagery of visual and expressive means used in lullabies – metaphors, comparisons, epithets, and also emphasizes the importance of songs in the moral education of the younger generation. Game poetry is represented in the article by such genre types as “pestushki” (for the smallest), “poteshki” – nursery rhymes, jokes, countings, drawing lots, their role and significance in the life of a child are revealed, attention is paid to their cognitive function. The article concludes with an analysis of children's calendar songs, which preserve traces of ancient magical representations of peoples, their ‘labor’ roots, and psychology. They are performed by children during calendar festivals and ceremonies.

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*Keywords:* Dagestan children's poetic folklore, artistic system



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## **1. Introduction**

The article reveals the originality of the artistic system of children's poetic folklore, which is, in turn, an integral part of the vast and diverse artistic system of children's folklore of the peoples of Dagestan, which is characterized by a variety of genres and genre versions – both poetic and prose. The artistic system of children's poetic folklore is characterized by its own genre system and aesthetic specificity. It contains such genres as lullabies, game poetry (including “pestushki” – rhymes for the smallest, “poteshki” – nursery rhymes, jokes, teasers, counting, drawing lots), and children's calendar songs.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The problem of this study is to present a genre picture of the development of children's poetic folklore of the peoples of Dagestan, to trace the artistic and stylistic features of folklore poetic works for children, to identify their distinctive features, to characterize the system of figurative-expressive means, poetic images, to reveal the connection of texts with the working world of the highlanders, to outline the principles of folk aesthetics.

## **3. Research Questions**

The art system of children's poetic folklore of the peoples of Dagestan is analyzed in the article on the basis of texts collected and published mainly by scientists from the Institute of Language, Literature and Art of the Dagestan Federal Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The ILLA Institute is doing a lot of work to publish a 20-volume Code of Monuments of Folklore of the Peoples of Dagestan, seven volumes of which have already been published. In 2019, the 7th volume “Children's Folklore” was published, which included the most common and artistically significant works of children's folklore of the peoples of Dagestan: Avars, Aguls, Bezhtins, Dargins, Kumyks, Laks, Lezgins, Nogais, Rutuls, Tabasarans, Tsakhurs (Collection of monuments of folklore of the peoples of Dagestan, 2019). The book includes both poetic and prose genres. The commonality and national specificity of children's folklore created by adults and children is a clear reflection of the ethnic diversity of the spiritual culture of multinational Dagestan. Children's folklore has been the subject of attention of many Dagestan scholars. The works of Abakarova (1991), Ganieva and Khaybullaev (2018) and others considered the ideological and aesthetic, genre and art features of children's folklore of each of the peoples of Dagestan.

Dagestan children's poetic folklore includes lullabies, game poetry and calendar poetry.

Lullabies are an extraordinary treasury of poetry, incorporating the ideals of good. These are songs lulling a child to sleep, and at the same time giving the first lessons of poetic perception of the world. In her songs, the mother – woman used bright colorful images to introduce the child to the outside world. As he grew older, their content changed, they introduced him to his native nature, to human activity, introduced him to everyday life, taught him to dream, that is, developed a practical and aesthetic attitude to reality.

Lullaby is one of the oldest genres of folklore. The surviving individual relic elements in the figurative system of works and, in some cases, archaic expressive means suggest that this genre in Dagestan developed over many centuries and influenced by the folklore of other peoples. So, Abakarova (1991), being on an expedition in 1971 in the village Ghenta of the Soviet (now Shamil) district, recorded a lullaby, which features the name of the semi-legendary ruler of the Sumerian (Mesopotamian) ruler of the city of Uruk (late XXVII – early XXVI centuries BC) Gilgamesh, who became famous for his deeds and became the main character of Sumerian mythology and epos.

An echo of the cult ban on pronouncing the name of a newborn and replacing it with the names of animals, birds, and domestic animals, dating back to totemic views, is observed in the early lullabies of the peoples of Dagestan – they never sound the name of a child protected from the evil eye. It should be noted that this ban in its own way contributed to the creation of imagery and expressiveness of the song text. The mother conveyed her deep love and tender feelings for the child using such names as “wolf cub”, “teddy bear”, “falcon”, “lamb”, “dove”, etc., which undoubtedly enhanced the emotional coloring and expressiveness of the song. Subsequently, it becomes a tradition of folk aesthetics and one of the artistic techniques for describing the image.

Lullabies can be divided into the following groups taking into account the age categories of children and their gender purpose: 1) songs for the smallest; 2) songs for boys; 3) songs for girls.

In the first months of life, the rhythmic change of sounds is important for the child. These are, as a rule, the simplest songs that are sung over an infant who does not yet understand the meaning of words, and in which the melody and chant prevail, creating a lyrical, calming mood. A simple, monotonous song calms him and puts him to sleep. Since the song was accompanied by a measured swing of the cradle, the rhythm is very important in it.

Over time, the child begins to recognize the mother, understand individual words, and lullabies intended for this period gradually take the form of a small simple story.

In the lullabies of the peoples of Dagestan, the desire to create a moral and aesthetic ideal of a person, the ideal of a hero, is expressed in a generalized form. The socio-economic, political, and geographical conditions of the mountaineer's life over the centuries have contributed to the formation of his national character. The life of nations, full of dangers, required high military qualities from members of society. Courage, fearlessness, fortitude – these are the qualities that people especially valued in a person... Songs ... expressing the aesthetic ideals of the people, had a certain educational value. A person was brought up on samples of folk works from an early age (Akhlakov, 1968).

Folklore is mainly a product of the working people, so from the very birth the successor of the human race was brought up in the best labor traditions, in the psychological climate of a humanistic attitude to the world. For centuries, the peoples of Dagestan have developed a code of moral and ethical rules and norms, where the first commandment was love for the Fatherland and humanism, and then as derivatives of this comprehensive theme for men – courage and hard work, for women – hard work and modesty.

At the same time, the harsh conditions of life gave rise to a special vitality in the highlanders, the ability to withstand adversity, the ability to stand up for themselves in word and deed in an antagonistic society. And therefore, the ideal hero in the view of the working people had to be a brave warrior, a

defender of their Fatherland, and a labor craftsman, handyman, and the owner of a sharp word, humor. In Dagestan, as Khalidova (1976) writes, “the figurativeness of speech, wit, the ability to express thoughts through comparisons, by creating semantic metaphors, in a word, all that we call eloquence, were highly valued. It is noteworthy that since childhood, the child tried to instill a taste for juicy and imaginative speech. Moreover, this tradition seems to go back centuries” (p. 112).

Thus, in the folklore of the peoples of Dagestan, a certain type of national character has developed, in which, along with the cult of physical strength, the singing of military prowess, labor and intellectual qualities occupy not the last place, which is reflected in children's folklore.

In the well-known Avar lullaby, which can be attributed to one of the earliest, the ideal of the hero, developed by the people over the centuries, is transmitted: "To sit on a horse deftly, / Proudly carry weapons, / To cross a stormy river, / To cut a dragon in the grass in half, / To build a fortress at crossroads, / To fight the enemy – / That's how you would grow up / For your mother! (Collection of monuments of folklore of the peoples of Dagestan, 2019).

The cult of physical strength in a certain period is noted as one of the main spiritual manifestations of society and as the main emotional and evaluative category in determining a person, his significance and value. The more physical strength a person possessed, the more significant he was, because in the difficult struggle with the world around him, he had to rely only on his strength and dexterity, to wage an uneasy struggle for existence. This is how the type of hero – a brave man, a hero with the utmost hyperbolization of his exploits and actions has developed in the popular consciousness. This image has become the main technique, based in its origins on the mythological worldview.

Along with the cult of physical strength, the lullaby also celebrates military prowess. The reality of the Mountain Country gave the people's imagination the richest material for heroic motives. It is these factors – the harsh conditions of the mountains and the constant struggle with foreign invaders – that have developed heroic traditions in folklore, including in lullabies dedicated to the boy. The ideal of a brave hero is vividly represented in the lullabies of all Dagestan peoples. They are based on a single aesthetic basis and outline the image of the future man, the cult of his personal heroism and other virtues.

Many songs dedicated to the boy speak of the courage of heroes who became famous in battles. Such songs, by their origin, are usually of a later nature, the heroes in them often have real prototypes – close, specific, taken from people's lives. So, for example, in the Dargin lullaby it is sung: “Ilalay, my beloved, / Layla, my dear, / Grow up, become beautiful. / Grow stronger, get married. / So that you become so brave, / As Kapila Mutay was, / So that you become so famous, / As Avar Shamil was”, – is sung in the Dargin lullaby.

Thus, the history of Dagestan, the fight against foreign invaders predetermined the heroic traditions of the people, which were developed in new historical conditions during the civil war, and then the Great Patriotic war, when Dagestanis once again confirmed their military glory by nominating brave men who were awarded the highest honor – the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. The Patriotic war has given the imagination and the heart a wealth of material about the legendary exploits. Dagestani mothers had someone to sing about. The folk tradition continued in the new songs.

Developing in the mainstream of all folk art and being a reflection of the real life of the mountaineers, the lullaby song could not but absorb the image of the worker, widely entered into the

national consciousness and his work. This theme for lullaby poetry is all the more important because it contained the primary educational function for this genre, to some extent transmitted the experience of life and aimed the child's consciousness at the fact that work determines the life of a person, that a person is famous for work.

In the cycle of labor songs in the lullaby of the peoples of Dagestan, a group of songs is dedicated to the boy – the future man, and the girl – the future woman, they draw the ideal of the woman and man developed by the people over the centuries. In accordance with it, a man should have hard work, high moral and physical qualities, a woman – modesty, kindness, diligence in work. All these motives of labor education and attitude to work in lullabies are predetermined by living conditions in the mountains, which had their own specifics and were fraught with special difficulties.

Lullaby labor song is often associated with the oldest forms of farming, primarily with hunting, which has long been a help in the life of the mountaineers, later – with agriculture and cattle breeding.

Lullabies reflect the work of a farmer, gardener, shepherd, and craftsman. With indefatigable energy, the people who lived in the mountainous and foothills areas won back patches of land from the harsh nature to plant wheat, grow orchards and vineyards. The shepherd's work assumed a special set of qualities and character traits. The work of a shepherd required special training, and therefore they, of course, could be a courageous and hardy person. The highest praise was due to those who knew how to protect sheep from wolves. In lullabies, the shepherd is characterized as a real hero, “snatching prey from the mouth of a wolf, extracting a tear from the eye of a tiger...”.

Later labor lullabies include songs with a social theme. Many texts express directly or indirectly the motives of class antagonism, social inequality. The protest against oppression, poverty and lawlessness – this is the mood of the era of feudalism, marked by the intensification of the struggle between the lower and upper classes of society. The truthfulness of the depiction of the life of the lower classes in this cycle of lullabies and the harsh social reality change the appearance of the lyrical hero, which testifies to the transformation of the song. It's no longer the moral of a brave man with his code of honor, but the moral of the poor working man and his class that becomes here determining (Abakarova, 1991).

In songs addressed to daughters, hard work and ability to work were the main wishes of mothers. The future woman had to be able to weed, mow, harvest, take care of livestock, weave, cope with household duties, and this folk wisdom is expressed in almost all lullabies with a labor theme, dedicated to girls. The Avar lullaby below illustrates the qualities that a mother wanted to see in her daughter: “...Modest as a celestial houri ... / Until the birds awaken, / Going to field work, / Until the quail wakes up, / Returning home.”

In folk aesthetics, external beauty was not a standard in itself. The ideal of female perfection in the folklore of the peoples of Dagestan in general and in the lullaby in particular is the combination of natural beauty with hard work, modesty and other qualities of national character, developed in the process of labor and life practice of the people. The beauty of a girl in the concept of the people had to be natural, not lost while working in the field under the scorching rays of the sun, in the wind, in the rain.

Lullabies are generally characterized by high imagery; their poetic system abounds in figurative and expressive means, which are a bizarre painting of epithets, comparisons, metaphors, symbols, etc.

The reflection of folk ideas about the beautiful is especially evident in the language means. An image expressing the aesthetic ideals of a people is most often identified with the natural world. Children in songs are compared with “fragrant pear”, “Georgian white grapes”, “white lamb”, “foal”, “moon”, etc. Favorite poetic images are “lamb”, “dove”, “cat”. Natural phenomena, animals, plants, and even household items serve as material for poetic paths in lullabies. Comparisons, epithets, and metaphors in them amaze with their imagery, aesthetic perfection, and depth of content. “Like a prayed rain – he, mother’s, is, / Like a prayed sun – he, mother’s, is / Like sunlight and moonlight – because he is, / Like a heart in the breast – because he is, / And like the keys to the heart – because he is / And like the keys to the chest – because he is, / Like gold in the chest – he, mother’s, is” – the mother sings in the Avar lullaby.

The main place in the composition of a lullaby song is occupied by a detailed monologue, built on the reception of the address, through which the emotionality and maximum concretization of the content, often expressed with didactic intent, is achieved. The lullaby poetry of the peoples of Dagestan is generally characterized by a semi-syllabic. There are lullabies with different numbers of syllables in a line, but rarely. Lullabies songs often have rhyming lines. The researcher of Avar folklore Khaybullaev (2018) emphasizes: “The presence of rhyme, the repetition of the same sounds at the end of a line is a phenomenon peculiar only to children's and lullabies songs. It is rare for song folklore in general. Features of the sound organization of lullabies lead to the fact that the verse of songs becomes sonorous, musical, easy to remember” (p. 92). But mostly lullabies are based on the repetition of consonances. Repetition of the same sounds makes the song more accessible to the child, helps to focus his attention, affects emotionally. Rhyme, alliteration, and assonance are the melodic basis of lullabies. Musically rich phrases and soft syllables are perceived by children easily and clearly. Speaking about the visual and expressive means of Avar lullabies, Khaybullaev (2018) rightly notes that “the original artistic forms and poetic means of lullabies are not repeated in any other genre of folk lyrics” (p. 70).

All the lullaby poetry of the peoples of Dagestan is unique, characterized by ease, liveliness and rhythmic variety of verse. In some lullabies, the organizing role belongs to the refrain. The structure of the verse of others is quite loose, the rhythm is slow. The absence of symmetrical division into stanzas and the free combination of various combinations of lines create their astrophysical organization.

In songs that do not contain any plot, but create a certain lyrical mood, where affectionate addresses to the child are next to the refrain, the verse often does not have a coherent architectonics. The improvisation inherent in these works varies freely and freely according to the preferences and individuality of the woman's imagination. Many works of major tone, where rhymes do not play a big role, are built on assonance. In other cases, the sound organization of a verse is subordinated to alliteration or based on combined repetitions.

The dominant mood of lullabies of the peoples of Dagestan, as a rule, is optimism. A woman looks forward to the future with hope. The tender and sad words of the mother, and sometimes complaints about a difficult fate, are intertwined with a belief in change; the tone of lullabies often is bright, full of happy dreams. At the same time although lullabies of the peoples of Dagestan give a real idea of the peasant life and moral and aesthetic views of the people, they also take a significant place in embellishing the future life of the child in the dreams of mothers, wishes for wealth were often an impossible dream, fantasy.

In the Soviet era, the content of lullabies is updated, modernized, and they reflect social changes in the life of the people. If at the beginning of the century they sounded the mother's dreams of daily bread, then in the twentieth century the motives are completely different. "With a pencil in your hand, / In a white coat, / You will be a doctor / Treating patients," – the mountain woman now sings to her son.

Game poetry is one of the varieties of children's folklore of the peoples of Dagestan, including the same genres as in Russian folk art: "pestushki" (rhymes for the smallest), "poteshki" – nursery rhymes, jokes, teasers, countings, drawing lots. It occupied a large place in the lives of children and represented a unique page of collective talent of the peoples of Dagestan. Researcher of children's folklore of Kalmyks Sarangov (2012) notes: "The artistic system of children's folklore is specific: it is characterized by an imaginative system, a tendency to rhythmized speech and play. Play is an element that is psychologically necessary for children" (p. 112). Accompanying a certain action and inseparably connected with elements of dramatic representation, game poetry in comparison with a lullaby was a more complex and diverse form of folk art, serving a growing person (younger and older), who, playing in a circle of peers, thinks, creates, imitating the life of adults. The game consistently continued the lessons of education. Already in their own practice, the baby learned the rules of behavior, perceived worthy examples. "Poteshki", jokes and especially games for older children instill in them work skills, foster feelings of kindness, courage, justice, develop the ability to think and fantasize, strengthen them physically.

"Pestushki" are short poetic songs of the mother or nanny that accompany the baby's wakefulness and movements in the first months of life. In Russian folklore, they got their name from the verb "nurture" – "carefully, with love to raise (young children); to nurse". When a child wakes up and stretches, they stroke the head and tummy, fold and spread the arms, massage the legs and accompany these movements with rhythmic "pestushki". The first "dialogues" between an adult and a child begin with affectionate, tender appeals from parents, to which they respond with joyful exclamations.

"Pestushki" gradually replaced by "poteshki" – nursery rhymes, songs that accompany games with the child's fingers, hands, and feet (similar to "Ladushki" and "Magpie" in Russian children's folklore). In these games, pedagogical instructions and a lesson are not uncommon. For example, the Lezgin nursery rhyme: "This one laid an egg, / This one put it in the oven, / This one cooked, / This one cleaned, / This one ate, / Beat it". Instructions to share with others, not to be greedy, which in the most entertaining form were given to the child as soon as he began to understand the meaning of words, are characteristic of the texts of nursery rhymes of each of the peoples of Dagestan, because humanism was one of the first commandments of the collective consciousness of the democratic strata of society.

The artistic word accompanies also the first steps of the child. For example, a simple Avar text: "The leg is dancing – the heart is dancing, / Get up, Magomed, jump-jump!" In these two simple lines, a bright image appears which also contains a capacious meaning: "The Foot is dancing – the heart is dancing". Such an artistic parallel enriches the verse, creating a metaphor that emphasizes the joy of the event.

The first step for a child is the first stage of growing up. The researcher of the Chechen children's folklore Rasumov (2017) writes: "In the period when the child tried to take the first steps, taking his leg, the Chechens (men and women) sang a little song: "Leg, leg, small leg / Stepping on the dirt – stained leg, / Rubbing on the grass, cleaned leg / Giving chest, soothing leg. / Leg, leg, small leg" (p. 47).

At one and a half to two years old, adults begin to teach the baby counting. For this purpose, there are various games with fingers and palms. To the need to teach children to count in order to develop their minds, the people-educator came to their own centuries-old experience. Basically, four-, five- and six-line rhymes that are uttered during elementary games with fingers, palms, etc., develop the child's mind, introduce him to the names of objects, household utensils, animals, birds, types of adult labor, teach him to compare.

There are no big differences in the content of Avar, Dargin, Kumyk, Lak, Lezgin, Tabasaran, Rutul, Agul, and Tsakhur texts of game songs. Among all these peoples, “poteshki” – nursery rhymes have a fairly stable composition, usually rhymed, and they are characterized by multiple rhymes, formed as a result of repeating the same formula at the end, in the middle or at the beginning of a line. Often used also such a stylistic device as anaphora (this, this, this, etc.), or repetition of a word particle, which appear to be the link of the entire sound organization of the text.

In “poteshki” – the nursery rhymes, a special sound organization is obvious, consisting in a specially reproduced rhythmicity, which is facilitated by sound coincidences, syntactic parallelisms or epiphora. They are accompanied by a simple game with the child, the simplest physical exercises, which were dictated by concern for strengthening the baby's muscles and his physical development.

“Pribautka” – joke is more complex in content than a “pestushka” or “poteshka”, the function of which is to enter into the most initial, but active communication with the baby, to address him with a kind word, to express wishes. It also differs from the nursery rhyme in that it is not related to the game. “Pribautka” is like a fairy tale or a story in verse, in which a picture of some bright event is given or a rapid action is depicted. Birds and animals are the characters of many jokes. Thus, the Avar “pribautka” teaches the child from an early age that in society it is necessary to strictly follow folk customs, in this case to be abstinent in food: “Partridge quacks: / – At night I go to the wedding. / The dove asks: / – Take me, poor. / – I’ll not take you, the dove: / You are a great glutton, / You’ll eat a lot, / You’ll be disgraced in front of everyone!”.

The plot of “pribautka”, as a rule, is limited to one episode, but there are also voluminous texts. When lengthening the plot, the “pribautka” resorts to its “chain” organization, borrowing the fairy-tale cumulateness. Often the compositional feature of it is a dialogical construction in the form of questions and answers. Among them can be attributed and tall tales-shifters, with their deliberate displacement of real connections and relationships.

The main role of these rhymes is educational. The child learns about people, animals, phenomena, objects, and their main properties. The texts of them differ in humor and subtle presentation of the idea, high poetry and variety of form. At the same time, “pribautka” can unobtrusively convey a certain didactic instruction in an entertaining form. So from such texts children learn the idea that everyone should work. This idea is expressed in a peculiar way in one of the Dargin texts, which is close in meaning to the Russian proverb “Hope for God, and do not flatter yourself”: “– Let's eat! / – What will we eat? / – What Allah will give. / – And if he doesn't, what will we do? / – Let's go to work!”

Other interesting types of game poetry of the peoples of Dagestan are widely used in folk art countings and drawing lots, involving children of different ages who have already entered the path of independent studies, fun with their peers. These genre varieties of game poetry, which once went back to



the creativity of adults and eventually became a game, are interesting primarily because they give scope for invention, improvisation of children's creativity, developing intelligence, resourcefulness, ingenuity, the ability to figuratively express thoughts, sometimes putting elements of allegory, conventions and other features of a fantastic property.

Counting rhyme is a rhyming verse consisting mostly of fictional words and consonants with an emphatically strict observance of the rhythm. In the children's game poetry of the peoples of Dagestan, counting rhymes are presented in two varieties – they are semantic and abstruse. Semantic rhymes have a certain content. A pronounced feature of counting rhymes is an unusual character, based on word-making, invention and wit, a clear rhythm; the indispensable components are counting, numbers, sometimes used in a figurative sense. Abstruse counting rhymes are “a set of rhymed desemantized stems, within which... words with lexical meanings can occur” (Khalilov, 2017, p. 80). The researchers are inclined to attribute the origin of abstruse figures to ancient times, when people, blindly believing in various deities, went to all sorts of tricks so that hostile forces did not interfere with them in the implementation of their plans. With the development of human consciousness, people no longer attach so much importance to taboos of counting. The need for fake words is exhausted, and the reader with abstruse parables is exhausted, and eventually becomes the property of a children's audience.

Thus, if at one time abstruse counting was far from a child's occupation, then later it began to perform the function of a game and develop in the context of children's folklore. Artistic elements are introduced into it, and words similar in consonance are invented to replace those that were previously used.

However, whatever content fills the texts of this genre, the determining factor is their rhythmic-intonation structure that subordinates the artistic system, emphasizing clear, divided into sound pauses combinations. Wordplay is achieved by an artful combination of meaningless rhyming words, such as in the Dargin text: “Izhizhilan, bizhizhilan, / Tukizhilan, balbazhilan, / Gudurbizhan, / Ghapan, Yappan, / Chiyar, biyar, / Kyanch!”.

Draws are short, concise works, often rhymed, used to divide the players into two parties and contain an appeal in the form of a question in which a choice is offered. The text of the draw often contains elements of a riddle that requires ingenuity when answering: “A bagel around the mill? / Or wild fly droppings?”. In the given Avar draw, the first concept means a snake, the second – bee honey. And children, for a while forgetting about the main function of the draw, are given to unraveling the meaning. Such texts contribute to the mental development of children and expand their vocabulary. Draws and counting rhymes which occupy the leisure of older children, activate in them the very act of creativity in them.

Modern draws naturally lose the hidden meaning that existed in archaic forms. Today, they already use new words and concepts. In the Avar village Urma of Levashinsky district, for example, the next draw was recorded: “A white-tailed plane? / Or a long-tailed rocket?”

The game, which gives scope for fiction, improvisation, and the introduction of one's own emotional coloring, helps the child's intellectual development, self-improvement, becomes a new, more significant factor in the perception, development and manifestation of aesthetic feelings, artistic finds. The combination of action and words, the distribution of dramatized tasks, intricate word-making,

dynamic dialogue, emphasized rhythm, aphorism, many epithets, metaphors and other visual means make children's games multicolor.

The poetic art associated with action is united by a number of specific features, namely "programmed", given, didactic orientation. The poetic vastness of these actions protects them from rebirth into purely sporting games, gives them a lively meaning and emotionality. Poetic texts and game action are thus artfully interconnected.

Calendar-ritual poetry, which is an accompaniment and part of the ritual of cult incantation, magnification, etc., had an ancient primitive religious basis. However, in the process of development of public consciousness, it lost its syncretic functions, breaking away from the ritual action and partly becoming the property of children's folklore. Then many calendar and ritual works were transformed into children's entertainment songs, which still contain traces of the ancient magical ideas of the people, their work and ancient psychology. Poetic appeals to the forces of nature: the sun, rain, water, wind, etc. researchers of children's folklore call "zaklichki" and "prigovorki". According to the idea of ancient people, they had a magical property, were filled with faith in the omnipotent forces of nature and turned to them. The younger members of the society, adopting the essence of the purpose of spells, adapted them to themselves and created something of their own model. The subject matter of these works is determined mainly by everyday concerns, which, as previously noted, were not alien to children in the working family. Despite the transformation of many texts of calendar-ritual poetry into children's entertainment songs, they still contain traces of the ancient magical ideas of the people, their "labor" roots, psychology, etc.

Among the peoples of Dagestan, children played an important role in the performance of rituals, especially calendar ones. The rite of causing rain, for example, among the Avars, Lezgins, and Laks, was performed by boys of 12–15 years old. Children had their own texts when the day of the onset of spring, winter, and the first furrow was celebrated. They also cast numerous spells.

On March 22, Dagestan celebrated the onset of spring, people expressed joy at the awakening of nature to a new life; there were performed the ceremonies that were supposed to help nature in its revival.

On the eve of the first day of spring, the Avars baked for children ceremonial small loaves in the form of figures of various animals. The boys made cones out of clay, into the upper part of which they stuck dry sticks or plant stalks. On the eve of the onset of spring, dry stalks were lit at night and launched into the air with a sling. A bonfire was also lit, around which young people were had fun. In general terms, in a similar way the holiday was celebrated by all the peoples of Dagestan. Burning objects launched into the air symbolized the sun. This ritual action with traces of mythology expressed the desire of man to help the sun in the fight against the cold, to accelerate the onset of heat, necessary for agricultural work. Lighting fires had the same purpose.

In the diverse ritual of meeting the coming new agricultural year, verbal creativity was an indispensable element. The songs sung by children were of a character appropriate to the holiday and the time of year, and they clearly reflect the anthropomorphic ideas of the people, expressed in the animation of nature, rejoicing at the arrival of spring.

The spring festival of the Kumyks – Navruz Bayram – took place somewhat differently from that of the Avars, Dargins and other mountaineers. In preparation for this day, women baked sweets, and in

the evening on the eve of the holiday, they lit lamps and put them on the windows. In the evening, children went in groups with snowdrops (“shatman”) in their hands through the courtyards and, having reached the middle of the courtyard, performed songs – Navruz-saryns. One of the children recited a stanza of the song, while the others joined in the chorus: “Shatman, shatman, may the day of Navruz be blessed!” During the Navruz holiday, it was customary to present children with eggs, symbolizing fertility, and sweets.

The beginning of field work was solemnly celebrated among many peoples of Dagestan. During the Celebration of the First Furrow, the population was notified in advance about this day, and a hard-working, respected person was selected in advance, who was given the honorary role of a ploughman during the first furrow. The ploughman harnessed the bulls, put on his fur coat turned inside out, and began to plow. The inverted fur coat was attributed to a magical power, allegedly able to make the fields become shaggy, like the clothing of a ploughman. The following function was assigned to children in this rite: as soon as the ploughman started to work, a crowd of children began to shower him with clods of earth, drenching him with water. The action was accompanied by the following song: “Let the wheat fall / Like the earth. / May the harvest be abundant, / may the grain increase!..”.

To children's calendar poetry can also be attributed songs included in the ritual of spells to send favorable weather. They were associated with pagan beliefs, accompanied the work of the farmer, cattle breeder. In the most primitive form, the peoples of Dagestan, as well as other peoples of the Caucasus, preserved the rite of invoking rain, which was attended by all the inhabitants of the village, including children. Among the Avars, for example, boys of 12–15 years old gathered in the fields secretly from the villagers. One of the participants was wrapped from head to foot in a green outfit (the mummers were called “Tsadal khama” – “Rain donkey”), and it was not supposed to be recognized, otherwise it was believed that the purpose of the ceremony would not be achieved. The procession entered the village with a prayer song for rain. At every house that the children approached, the mummers were doused with water and offered corn or beans. The action symbolized the wild growth of herbs, fields after rain. The text accompanying the ceremony had a concrete and quite real content, expressing the urgent concerns of the peasant, which became the concerns of children involved in the hard work of the mountaineer from an early age: “Let it rain hard, Kodo! .. / the Green grass has dried up, / Pity us, Kodo, / Don't let us die... / Pity the small orphans, / And animals who can't speak, / Let it rain hard, Kodo!” The given text of the Avar song is interesting by referring to Kodo (literal translation – Old, Venerable, Grandmother). According to the Avars, she personifies the ancestress of the Earth, which is associated with the idea of fertility and all the benefits that come from it. Among the Lezgins and Laks, this rite was performed almost in the same way. The mummers of Lezgins call “Peshapay”, Laks – “Kurnil chittu” (“Field cat”). The very process of the rite, in which children actively participated, and the accompanying text are typologically similar to the rite of causing rain in almost all the peoples of Dagestan.

The rite of invoking the sun has also been preserved among the peoples of Dagestan. Among the Dargins, Kumyks, and Lezgins, it has come down to us in many respects in its original form, while in the folklore of the Avars it has survived only in the form of children's play, while having traces of a visible connection with a once-ritual action. Performing the rite of invoking the sun, Dargins, Lezgins, Kumyks resorted to a variety of methods. Among the Lezgins, this rite was called “Ala peh” – this was also the

name of a scarecrow with a red face, representing the sun; Tabasaran youth put a shirt on a wooden shovel, depicting this scarecrow. He was called “Guni” (“Invoker of the sun”). Dargin children dressed up a shovel in a woman’s dress and, having organized a march through the village, sang: “Oh, let the sun may rise, the sun may rise!.. / Let the sun rise with a face like a shovel!.. / Let the farmers’ fields be mown... / Let the shepherds’ sheep multiply...»

The texts of children's calendar and ritual songs of the peoples of Dagestan are basically the same in form and content. Their genre feature is the imperative form. One of the main visual means is hyperbole, which is used to achieve a special imagery. Another feature of Dagestan children's calendar songs is the use of a refrain that becomes an organic part of them. The refrain is an important component of the poetic folklore tradition – and in this context it is an element that performs one of the functions of a spell that conveys the people's faith in the magic power of the word.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of our research is to study the features of the artistic system of children's poetic folklore of the peoples of Dagestan, represented by different genre forms: lullabies, game poetry, calendar songs; to reveal the specifics of artistic means and aesthetic foundations of folk worldview and culture in the works of oral folk poetry; to analyze the works of various folklore genres as elements of a unified artistic system.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The paper uses such methods as theoretical analysis of scientific literature on the subject of research; descriptive method, which includes observations, interpretations, comparisons, generalizations; descriptive and analytical method, based on the description and analysis of individual literary texts that are the objects of research, and allows you to convey the specific features of poetic folklore works.

#### **6. Findings**

The artistic system of children's poetic folklore of Dagestan, considered in the article as an artistic variety of historically formed social consciousness and activity, which has its own content components and general features of the artistic form, testifies to the deep humanistic and democratic basis, high ideological orientation and aesthetic perfection of remarkable samples created thanks to the inexhaustible creative forces of the people. The artistic material of lullabies, game and calendar poetry is one of the complex syncretic types of folk art, in which the echoes of ancient forms and a number of relict elements clearly appear. As in lullabies, in game and calendar poetry you can feel the psychological structure, the nature and originality of the national character, the specifics of work, life, religious beliefs, echoes of distant history, different stages of development of the folklore of the peoples of Dagestan, the evolution of collective creativity, including its poetics, as well as the indestructible spirit of optimism of a person.

Addressed to the emerging person or created by him, children's poetry contains human experience – and above all, working experience – in design and in the form accessible to the

understanding of the child. The complex of educational, didactic moments in the artistic works was “developed” with great care and for all occasions. And instilling moral and ethical qualities, presenting each time a moral lesson, children's poetry in artistic terms contributed to the development of aesthetic taste of the child. That is why almost everything created by the people for the children, in whom society saw its future, is so poetically beautiful.

## 7. Conclusion

The artistic system of Dagestan children's poetic folklore testifies to its labor basis, to its strongly developed ideals of patriotism, kindness and continuity throughout the entire social practice of people. Addressed to the emerging person, children's poetic folklore reproduces the work and life experience in a way that the child can understand. In the name of all this, a lullaby was sung, a joke was told, a game was created, accompanied by a poetic frame, this or that rite was performed, and all this beautiful word-making, which led in its centuries-old evolution to a high imagery, absorbed and gave to each succeeding generation all the truly humanistic beginnings of life.

Children's poetic folklore, which reflects the issues of folk pedagogy based on the life experience of the peoples of Dagestan, had a great influence on the development of Dagestan children's literature. Humanism, humanity, optimism, life-affirming principle, filling the works of oral folk art, the expression in them of the idea of exalting labor, the national basis of stories – all these best qualities of the folklore of the peoples of Dagestan are adopted by Dagestan writers, the creators of Dagestan children's literature. Literature for children has maintained a living connection with oral folk art throughout its development (Mukhamedova, 2001).

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