LINGUOCULTUROLOGICAL STUDY OF RIDDLES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT. The article examines the linguoculturological features of riddles in English and Uzbek languages. It explores the origin and cultural significance of riddles as reflections of collective wisdom and worldview. Through comparative analysis, the study identifies semantic, symbolic, and cultural similarities and differences, revealing how riddles represent national mentality and language worldview within each culture.

Key words: riddle, linguoculturology, folklore, cultural code, national worldview, semantics, symbolism, similarity, difference, intercultural communication.

ЛИНГВОКУЛЬТУРОЛОГИЧЕСКОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ЗАГАДОК В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

АННОТАЦИЯ. В статье рассматриваются лингвокультурологические особенности загадок в английском и узбекском языках. Исследование раскрывает происхождение жанра, его роль в отражении народного мировоззрения и культурных ценностей. На основе сопоставительного анализа определены семантические и культурные сходства и различия английских и узбекских загадок, отражающие особенности национального мышления и языковой картины мира.

Ключевые слова: загадка, лингвокультурология, фольклор, культурный код, национальное сознание, семантика, символ, сходство, различие, межкультурная коммуникация.

INGLIZ VA O‘ZBEK TILLARIDAGI TOPISHMOQLARNING LINGVOKULTUROLOGIK TADQIQI

ANNOTATSIYA. Mazkur maqolada topishmoq janrining ingliz va o‘zbek xalqlari madaniy merosidagi o‘rni hamda ularning lingvokulturologik xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda topishmoqlarning kelib chiqishi, xalq tafakkurini va milliy dunyoqarashni aks ettirishdagi roli, ularning madaniy kod sifatidagi ahamiyati yoritilgan. Ingliz va o‘zbek topishmoqlari misolida ularning semantik, estetik va madaniy o‘xshash hamda farqli jihatlari lingvokulturologik nuqtai nazardan o‘rganiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: topishmoq, lingvokulturologiya, xalq og‘zaki ijodi, madaniy kod, milliy tafakkur, semantika, o‘xshashlik, farqlilik, ramz, madaniyatlararo muloqot.

Introduction. In the context of today’s globalization and intercultural communication, language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a central phenomenon that expresses national culture, reflects the thinking patterns, and worldview of a people. Accordingly, studying language and culture as an interconnected system is of great importance. In particular, unique genres of oral folk art—such as proverbs, sayings, fairy tales, and riddles—should be analyzed in depth within the frameworks of linguoculturology, ethnolinguistics, and cognitive linguistics [2, p. 15].

From this perspective, the topic “Linguoculturological study of riddles in English and Uzbek languages” is relevant and scientifically significant. A riddle, as one of the oldest genres of oral folk art, originated in the early stages of human cognition. Researchers argue that riddles were initially associated with ritualistic, religious, and mythological beliefs [16, p. 105]. Archaeological findings indicate that riddles existed in the cultures of Babylon, Egypt, and Ancient Greece as early as the second millennium BCE [14, p. 38]. For instance, the famous “Riddle of the Sphinx” in Greek mythology symbolizes human reasoning and spiritual development [2, p. 87].

In European literary traditions, the earliest written records of riddles date back to the 9th century in the English *Exeter Book*, which contains over 90 poetic riddles addressing themes of nature, humanity, morality, and religion [7, p. 12]. English riddles often employ linguistic tools such as metaphor, wordplay, antonymy, and paradox to create aesthetic meaning.

In Uzbek oral folk art, riddles occupy a prominent place. They are closely linked with the people’s way of life, labor activities, customs, and their relationship with nature. Uzbek riddles are usually short, rhythmic, and rhymed, emphasizing imagery, folk humor, and sharp logical thinking. For example: Uzbek example: “Oq sandiq ochildi, ichidan qizil marjon sochildi” – Answer: Pomegranate. In Uzbek riddles, imagery and ordinary objects are often connected to cultural context. For example, the above pomegranate riddle symbolizes not only the fruit but also abundance and prosperity, reflecting the cultural perceptions, value system, and historical experience of the people [6, p. 56].

Similarly, an English riddle with comparable cognitive and cultural meaning is: English example: “I am red and full of seeds, hidden inside a crown of skin, open me and find a treasure within” – Answer: Pomegranate [7, p. 50]. These examples demonstrate that riddles function as a linguoculturological mirror, reflecting societal knowledge, cultural values, and symbolic thinking. Therefore, analyzing riddles from a linguoculturological perspective allows a deep understanding of the mentality, value system, and cognitive model of a nation [2, p. 20].

Methods

In this study, English and Uzbek riddles were analyzed from linguoculturological and structural-syntactic perspectives. Research materials included: English riddles: *The Exeter Book* (9th century), English folk riddles, and children's riddles. Uzbek riddles: Collections of oral folk art, ethnographic sources.

Analysis methods:

1. Structural-syntactic analysis (question-answer form, metaphorical and imagery level);
2. Linguoculturological approach (identification of cultural values, symbols, and metaphorical features);
3. Comparative analysis (identifying similarities and differences).

Results

According to Rijenkova, riddles reveal the semantic and lexical richness of a language and reflect national culture, thought patterns, and values [11, p. 14]. Saitbayeva emphasizes that riddles not only preserve elements of play and entertainment but also embody metaphorical and symbolic features unique to a culture [12, p. 37].

Uzbek riddle example:

• "Hammaga to‘n tikaman, o‘zim yalang‘och" – Answer: Needle

English riddle example:

• "Poor little Susy on the hill with one eye" – Answer: Needle

Hoshimov analyzed the structural aspects of riddles, highlighting that the question-answer format, along with metaphor and imagery, stimulates the listener's thinking [6, p. 27].

Nature-related riddles include:

• Uzbek: "Kechasi chiqar, kunduzi yashirinar" – Answer: Star
• English: "I am a body that shines bright, visible at night but hidden by light" – Answer: A star

Ziyayev analyzed riddles related to vegetables:

• Uzbek: "Pak-pakana bo‘yi bor, yetti qavat to‘ni bor" – Answer: Onion [17, p. 56];
• English: "He who buys me cuts off my tail, takes off my suit of silk, and weeps beside me when I am dead" – Answer: An onion.

Discussion

Analysis shows that English and Uzbek riddles:

1. Are structurally built in a question-answer format with metaphorical and symbolic expressions;
2. Reflect cultural values, nature, and human traits linguoculturologically;
3. Share common features: metaphorical imagery, moral-ethical values, and entertainment elements;

4. Differ in that Uzbek riddles often express culture through national customs, religious symbols, and numbers, while English riddles adopt a more universal, philosophical, and metaphorical approach.

Thus, riddles are an effective source for studying the interaction between two cultures, shared human values, and the model of national cognition through linguoculturological and structural analysis.

Conclusion. This article conducted a linguoculturological and structural analysis of English and Uzbek riddles. The study demonstrates that the riddle genre is a unique form of oral folk art that expresses folk cognition, cultural values, and national imagery while also fostering cognitive and semantic processes.

Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek riddles highlights:

1. Both are expressed in a question-answer format with metaphorical and symbolic expressions;
2. They reflect national values, elements of nature, and human virtues linguoculturologically;
3. Similarities: metaphorical imagery, moral-ethical values, and entertainment elements;
4. Differences: Uzbek riddles convey culture through national customs, religious symbols, and numbers, while English riddles reflect universal and metaphorical philosophical perspectives.

Analyzing riddles from a linguoculturological perspective allows for a clearer understanding of intercultural interactions, shared human values, and national cognitive models. This study serves as an important scientific resource for exploring the interconnection between language and culture and for understanding folk oral art in greater depth.

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