GENRE AND DIDACTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF KARAKALPAK RIDDLES

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ABSTRACT: *This study examines the genre-specific and didactic characteristics of Karakalpak riddles and their pedagogical significance in the development of primary school pupils' cognitive skills. As a traditional form of oral folklore, Karakalpak riddles embody the historical worldview, cultural values, and aesthetic perceptions of the Karakalpak people. Despite their brevity, riddles contain rich figurative, symbolic, and metaphorical elements that stimulate logical reasoning, imaginative thinking, and interpretative skills. The study analyzes the structural, thematic, and stylistic features of riddles, emphasizing their dialogical form, imagery, and metaphorical construction. Particular attention is given to their developmental potential in fostering attention, memory, speech competence, creativity, and problem-solving abilities among young learners.*

Keywords: *riddles, oral folklore, cognitive development, primary education, didactic potential, genre characteristics.*

Karakalpak riddles represent one of the most ancient and significant genres of oral folk literature, reflecting the historical worldview, labor traditions, ecological awareness, and aesthetic consciousness of the Karakalpak people. As a folkloric phenomenon, the riddle is a concise yet semantically dense verbal construction in which the essential characteristics of an object or phenomenon are encoded through figurative, symbolic, and metaphorical language. The communicative purpose of the riddle lies in stimulating

intellectual engagement, requiring the recipient to decode hidden meanings through logical reasoning. From a genre-theoretical perspective, Karakalpak riddles are characterized by structural brevity, semantic compression, imagery, dialogical orientation, and thematic diversity. Brevity functions not merely as a formal attribute but as an organizing principle that ensures the concentration of meaning. The compact nature of riddles necessitates precision of linguistic expression and the careful selection of distinctive features that allow identification of the concealed object. Such structural economy enhances cognitive engagement, as the listener or reader must analyze limited but meaningful clues.

Imagery constitutes a central genre-defining feature of Karakalpak riddles. Objects and phenomena are not directly named but represented through metaphorical or symbolic associations. Celestial bodies, natural elements, domestic tools, and human body parts are frequently depicted through indirect comparison, personification, or allegory. This figurative encoding encourages interpretative reasoning and associative thinking. The decoding process requires learners to establish logical relationships between metaphorical descriptions and real-world referents, thereby strengthening abstract thinking skills.

The extensive use of artistic devices such as metaphor, simile, hyperbole, and personification further enhances the aesthetic and cognitive dimensions of riddles. Through these devices, even commonplace objects acquire imaginative resonance. The transformation of inanimate objects into animated entities, or the exaggeration of scale for expressive purposes, exemplifies the creative manipulation of language inherent in folkloric expression. Such stylistic features promote not only logical reasoning but also imaginative and creative cognition.

Another essential genre characteristic is the dialogical structure of riddles. Typically formulated in interrogative form, riddles presuppose an

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interactive communicative situation. The question-and-answer dynamic transforms the riddle into a collaborative intellectual activity. Within educational contexts, this dialogical quality fosters communicative competence, argumentation skills, and collective reasoning. Pupils articulate hypotheses, justify their assumptions, and negotiate meaning in a shared cognitive space.

Thematically, Karakalpak riddles demonstrate considerable diversity. They encompass representations of natural phenomena, seasonal cycles, celestial bodies, flora and fauna, domestic life, labor instruments, and everyday material culture. This thematic richness reflects the intimate connection between traditional Karakalpak livelihood and the natural environment. The prevalence of imagery related to agriculture, fishing, and animal husbandry reveals the socio-economic foundations of historical life. Consequently, riddles serve not only as linguistic constructs but also as cultural archives preserving collective memory and identity.

From a didactic standpoint, Karakalpak riddles possess substantial developmental potential. The process of solving a riddle engages multiple cognitive operations, including analysis, comparison, generalization, abstraction, and inferential reasoning. Each riddle constitutes a micro-level problem situation requiring intellectual effort and strategic thinking. As such, riddles function as natural instruments for cultivating logical reasoning and problem-solving competence in primary school learners.

Furthermore, riddles contribute to the development of attention and memory. Their concise structure requires focused listening and retention of critical details. Repetition and memorization practices enhance both short-term and long-term memory capacity. The recitation and reinterpretation of riddles further consolidate linguistic competence.

Speech development represents another significant didactic dimension. When learners justify their answers, they practice coherent speech production,

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logical structuring of arguments, and grammatically accurate expression. Engagement with Karakalpak-language riddles simultaneously enriches vocabulary and familiarizes pupils with traditional lexical forms and stylistic nuances.

Creativity is likewise stimulated through riddle composition activities. When pupils generate their own riddles, they engage in higher-order cognitive processes such as synthesis and abstraction. The necessity to encode meaning indirectly cultivates flexible thinking and linguistic innovation. This constructive engagement transforms learners from passive recipients of knowledge into active creators of meaning.

In addition to cognitive benefits, Karakalpak riddles transmit moral and cultural values. Through symbolic representations of labor, nature, and everyday life, they implicitly promote diligence, attentiveness, resourcefulness, and respect for cultural heritage. In this regard, riddles function as instruments of both intellectual and moral education.

In conclusion, Karakalpak riddles are defined by brevity, imagery, metaphorical encoding, dialogical structure, and thematic multiplicity. Their didactic capacity extends to the development of logical reasoning, attention, memory, speech competence, creativity, and cultural awareness. The systematic incorporation of Karakalpak riddles into primary education aligns with contemporary competence-based pedagogical approaches and supports holistic cognitive and cultural development.

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