



SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF RIDDLES FORMED ON THE BASIS OF NATURAL PHENOMENA (BASED ON UZBEK AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES)

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Abstract. *This article examines the semantic features of riddles based on natural phenomena in Uzbek and English languages. The study focuses on identifying denotative and connotative meanings, metaphorical structures, and semantic mechanisms used in riddles referring to natural elements such as the sun, moon, wind, rain, and snow. A comparative approach is applied to reveal similarities and differences in semantic representation and cultural interpretation. The findings demonstrate that while both languages employ metaphor and symbolic thinking, Uzbek riddles tend to be more expressive and culturally embedded, whereas English riddles are often concise and structurally simple.*

Keywords: *riddle, semantics, natural phenomena, metaphor, connotation, linguoculturology, semantic field, comparative analysis*

In modern linguistics, increasing attention is being paid to the study of language units not only as formal structures but also as carriers of cultural, cognitive, and semantic information. Within this framework, paremiological units—such as proverbs, riddles, and aphorisms—occupy a significant place, as they reflect the worldview, experience, and collective knowledge of a particular speech community. Among these, riddles represent a unique genre that combines linguistic creativity, metaphorical thinking, and cultural symbolism.



Riddles formed on the basis of natural phenomena constitute an important segment of folklore in both Uzbek and English linguistic traditions. Natural elements such as the sun, moon, wind, rain, snow, and lightning serve as primary sources for metaphorical encoding in riddles. These phenomena are not only physical realities but also symbolic constructs that reflect human perception of the environment. Through figurative language, riddles transform natural events into imaginative descriptions, thus creating a bridge between nature and cognition[1].

From a semantic perspective, such riddles are characterized by a high degree of metaphorization, implicit meaning, and associative thinking. The semantic structure of riddles often involves hidden referents, where the literal meaning differs significantly from the intended interpretation. This dual-layered structure requires the listener or reader to decode the underlying meaning based on cultural knowledge, linguistic competence, and contextual clues. Therefore, the study of riddles provides valuable insights into semantic processes such as metaphor, metonymy, polysemy, and symbolic representation.

A comparative analysis of Uzbek and English riddles based on natural phenomena allows us to identify both universal and culture-specific features. While certain natural elements (e.g., the sun as a source of light or the wind as movement) are universally conceptualized, their linguistic representation and symbolic interpretation may vary across cultures. Uzbek riddles often reflect a close relationship with agrarian life, traditional worldview, and Eastern poetic imagery, whereas English riddles may demonstrate different stylistic patterns and cultural associations shaped by Western traditions[2].

The relevance of this study lies in its contribution to the fields of linguoculturology, semantics, and comparative linguistics. By analyzing riddles as linguocultural units, the research highlights the interaction between language, thought, and culture. Furthermore, it helps to reveal how natural



phenomena are conceptualized and encoded differently in Uzbek and English languages.

Riddles are one of the oldest forms of oral folklore, reflecting human cognitive processes and cultural perception of the world. They function as both linguistic and cultural units, encoding knowledge through figurative and symbolic language[3].

Natural phenomena have always played a central role in human life, making them a frequent subject in riddles across cultures. The semantic analysis of such riddles allows us to explore how language users conceptualize and interpret natural elements.

Uzbek riddles are rich in metaphor and personification, reflecting a close relationship between humans and nature[4]. *"It has no body, but leaves traces; It has no wings, but flies."* **Answer: Wind.** *"It cries without eyes."* **Answer: Rain.** *"White cotton spread over the earth."* **Answer: Snow.** *"What falls but never rises?"* **Answer: Rain.** *"I have no wings, but I can fly."* **Answer: Cloud.** *"I shine during the day and disappear at night."* **Answer: Sun.**

The analysis shows that both Uzbek and English riddles use natural phenomena as a semantic foundation, but they differ in stylistic and cultural expression. Uzbek riddles tend to reflect a deeper emotional and cultural connection with nature, often using vivid imagery and poetic language. In contrast, English riddles emphasize brevity and logical reasoning. Natural phenomena form a core semantic domain in riddles across both languages. Uzbek riddles demonstrate greater metaphorical richness and cultural symbolism. English riddles prioritize simplicity and clarity. The interaction of denotative and connotative meanings is essential for riddle interpretation. Semantic analysis reveals the deep connection between language, cognition, and culture.



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