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# LINGUOCULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RIDDLES FORMED ON THE BASIS OF THE LEXEME RAIN

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### Abstract

This article examines the linguocultural characteristics of riddles formed on the basis of the lexeme *rain*. As a significant natural phenomenon, rain occupies an important place in the linguistic worldview of many nations and is reflected in folklore genres, particularly riddles. The study analyzes the semantic, symbolic, cultural, and cognitive aspects of rain-related riddles and reveals their role in preserving national traditions, beliefs, and values. The research demonstrates that riddles based on the lexeme *rain* embody both universal and culture-specific perceptions of nature.

**Keywords:** Linguoculturology, riddle, rain, lexeme, folklore, linguistic worldview, culture, symbolism.

### Introduction

Language and culture are inseparable phenomena that interact continuously in the process of human communication. Linguoculturology studies the relationship between language and culture and investigates how cultural knowledge is encoded in linguistic units. Among folklore genres, riddles represent a valuable source for understanding cultural perceptions and traditional knowledge.

Natural phenomena frequently serve as the basis for riddles because they are closely connected with human life and experience. One such phenomenon is rain, which has long been associated with fertility, prosperity, purification, and divine

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blessing in many cultures. Consequently, riddles based on the lexeme *rain* reflect not only linguistic creativity but also cultural attitudes toward nature.

The purpose of this article is to identify and analyze the linguocultural characteristics of rain-based riddles and to determine how they contribute to the representation of cultural values and collective knowledge.

Linguoculturology considers language as a repository of cultural information. According to this approach, lexical units may function as cultural symbols that reflect a community's worldview. The lexeme *rain* possesses a rich semantic structure because it denotes both a meteorological phenomenon and a cultural symbol.

Riddles are metaphorical texts that describe an object indirectly through figurative language. Their interpretation requires not only linguistic competence but also cultural knowledge. Therefore, riddles serve as an effective means of transmitting traditional beliefs and social experience from one generation to another.

The primary semantic feature of rain-related riddles is the indirect representation of precipitation through metaphorical descriptions. Consider the following example:

*It falls from the sky,  
Has no wings, yet flies.  
It waters fields and flowers,  
Giving life for hours.*

**Answer:** Rain

The riddle emphasizes the life-giving function of rain. The semantic focus is not merely on the physical phenomenon but on its beneficial impact on agriculture and nature.

Another example:

*Thousands of silver threads  
Descend from heaven above,*

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*Touch the earth softly,  
And disappear without a trace.*

**Answer:** Rain

In this example, rain is conceptualized through the metaphor of “silver threads,” highlighting its visual appearance and aesthetic value.

Rain frequently functions as a cultural symbol. In many traditions, it symbolizes fertility, abundance, renewal, and blessing. The symbolic interpretation is evident in riddles where rain is associated with growth and prosperity.

Example:

*I arrive without knocking,  
The fields welcome me gladly,  
Seeds awaken at my touch,  
And green life follows behind me.*

**Answer:** Rain

The symbolism of fertility is clearly expressed through references to seeds and vegetation. Such imagery reflects agricultural values deeply rooted in traditional societies.

From a cognitive perspective, rain-based riddles reveal how people categorize and conceptualize natural phenomena. The descriptions often rely on sensory experience, including sight, sound, and touch.

For example:

*I drum on roofs,  
Dance on windows,  
Sing in the streets,  
Yet no one sees my face.*

**Answer:** Rain

This riddle demonstrates how human perception of rain is organized through auditory and visual experiences. The phenomenon is personified and conceptualized as a living being.

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The cultural significance of rain varies across societies depending on climate, geography, and economic conditions. In agricultural communities, rain is often viewed positively because it ensures successful harvests. Consequently, many traditional riddles portray rain as a welcomed guest or a source of wealth.

In English-speaking cultures, rain may also symbolize melancholy, mystery, or emotional reflection, especially in literary traditions. However, folklore riddles generally emphasize its practical and beneficial functions.

The cultural image of rain thus reflects the collective experience of a community and its relationship with the natural environment.

The analysis reveals that the lexeme *rain* possesses significant linguocultural potential. In riddles, it functions as a linguistic sign that conveys information about nature, human experience, and cultural values. The figurative descriptions found in rain-based riddles illustrate how language transforms ordinary natural phenomena into meaningful cultural symbols.

Moreover, similarities among rain-related riddles across different cultures indicate universal human experiences, while differences reflect specific cultural traditions and environmental conditions. Thus, rain-based riddles represent both universal and national aspects of human cognition.

The study demonstrates that riddles formed on the basis of the lexeme *rain* possess distinctive linguocultural characteristics. Their semantic structure reflects the physical properties of rain, while their symbolic content conveys cultural values related to fertility, prosperity, renewal, and life. Through metaphorical imagery and figurative language, these riddles preserve traditional knowledge and contribute to the formation of a linguistic worldview.

Therefore, rain-based riddles serve as an important object of linguocultural research, illustrating the intricate relationship between language, culture, and human cognition. Their analysis enhances our understanding of how natural phenomena are represented in folklore and how cultural meanings are encoded in language.

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