

THE RIDDLE AS AN OBJECT OF LINGUISTIC RESEARCH

The article attempts to systematize different linguistic approaches to riddle studies and explore aspects of modern research to distinguish this folklore genre. Special attention is paid to cognitive-semiotic and discursive features of riddles as those occupying a leading position in modern linguistic studies. The diversity of subjects of the genre has been illustrated on the examples of English and Ukrainian riddles.

Keywords: riddle, answer, linguistic addressee, addresser, cognitive-semiotic, discursive.

Introduction

Since ancient time the riddle as a means of cleverness, intelligence, attentiveness and tests of mental abilities lives and is constantly evolving in the oral artistic creativity of every people. Aristotle admitted that this particular genre of folklore is a kind of colorful, skillfully made metaphor that reveals (mostly in the form of a witty question that requires an answer-interpretation) the nature of certain object through reality signs somehow similar, but often taken from very different spheres of life. In their comparison certain “affinity” of things, which highlights the main features of a riddle-metaphor, giving poetry to ordinary objects and manifestations of human life is revealed [2, p. 5].

In the process of cultural and historical development of mankind the role of the riddle as cognitive and educational factor became vivid. In many nations of the ancient world, this genre was a way of developing mental abilities of the younger generation. Guessing witty questions is exciting and attracts kids at all times: a game for them is the most accessible and acceptable activity. Deep objectivity, brightness and concrete fact or the image that form the core of the riddle, meet the psychological features of perception of a child [2, p. 5]:

- *Довгий, зелений – добрий і солений,
Добрий і сирий – хто він такий? (Огірок).*
- *Котиться клубочок зовсім без ниточок.
Замість ниточок – триста голочок (Їжак).*
- *Біле, як сорочка, пухнате, як квочка.
Крил не має, а гарно літає.
Що це за птиця, що сонця боїться? (Сніг).*

However, for the folklorists and linguists who seriously study riddles, they are far from being merely the witty bit of entertainment it is commonly supposed to be. It is, in fact, a complex linguistic and aesthetic structure that, when subjected to systematic and scientific study, reveals a great deal about the major human systems – such as language,

culture, and art – with which it is inextricably bound up [11]. In connection with this the riddle is a valuable object of linguistic studies containing interesting ancient linguistic and extra-linguistic information. However, it has rarely attracted attention of linguists, so the study of its language features is vital.

Many works are devoted to structural, semantic and pragmatic features of the riddles. Among the scholars who studied structural-semantic and communicative characteristics of these texts are: Z. Volotska, A. Golovachova, O. Selivanova, R. Zhores, G. Onyshchenko and others.

A. Moysiienko, Yu. Levin, E. Köngäs-Maranda and V. Mazuryk focused their research on the relationship of the form and the meaning and their importance in the construction of a riddle and a solution. Anthropocentric character in riddles was investigated by O. Tymchenko. Semiotic mechanisms of figurative images in riddles were analyzed by A. Zhurynskyy; the language of riddles was the object of the research by professors W. J. Pepicello and Thomas A. Green. Paying due attention to structural and semantic aspect, linguists consider the specificity of these paremiological units as fragments of folk model of the world.

The aim of the article is a complex approach to the study of riddles from a linguistic perspective.

Riddles form a great semiotic system in which the ideas of people about the world have been fixed from ancient times. The language of riddles is a part of the overall riddle language system and uses its laws and the possibility of categorizing reality in an unusual way, making riddles a tool for the development of human thought and overcoming stereotypes created by everyday usage of language units. Recently folklore texts have become the subject of conceptual linguistic research because they reflect the cultural background and serve as the material for the reconstruction of national mentality and stereotypes [4]. Ukrainian folk riddles, in

particular, are characterized by the richness and variety of their topics. Here there are riddles about the structure of the universe, flora and fauna, the riddle of a man, human shelter, food, etc.:

- *Голубий шатер увесь світ накрив* (Небо).
- *Сидить дівця у темній темниці* (Морква).
- *Штири тики, два патики, сьомий замахайло* (Рогата худоба).
- *Повен хливець білих овець* (Зуби).

The language of folklore is an important object of modern ethnolinguistics. To solve the problem of language and ethnic psychology, language and culture, language and the reflection of the conditions of national life, language and mythology, ethnolinguistics and ethnopsychology turn to developments in the field of linguosemiotics and cognitive linguistics. The research of folklore genres complements new linguistic theory based on generalizations introduced into scientific circulation of factual material and its projection on the so-called ethnic field.

As for the language of folklore, including riddles, we have to deal with the collective mind, which formed the image of the real world, especially the inside world as opposed to outside one, subjective to objective, spiritual to physical, non-material to material. The language of riddles through verbalized national – cultural stereotypes reflects the ethnic “I” of Ukrainians, their perception of the outside world and its reflection in a word, phrase or set phrases. The interaction between physical and metaphysical induces a person to think by images that have vivid expression in paremiological units where the symbolization of things creates, after all, a symbolic name, for symbolic image is not an external connection between two objects or compliance and internal analogy clearly represented in the semantic structure of the riddle, which is particularly complicated form of knowledge, when the name of the ordinary environment reality is deliberately “hidden” in other objects of the outside world [7, p. 1]. For example, consider the following English riddles:

- *Many eyes and never a nose, one tongue and about it goes* (Shoe).
- *It first walks on four legs, then on two, then on three legs* (Man).
- *What has an eye but cannot see?* (Needle).
- *What has teeth but cannot eat?* (Saw).

To analyze paremiological units researchers use structural-semantic, cognitive-semiotic and discursive approaches. The supporters of structural-semantic approach to the study of riddles (E. König-Maranda, Yu. Levin) focus on its components. The riddle is regarded as “a structural unit, which always consists of two components – the image part and a solution”

[5, p. 256]. These scientists support the idea that the structure of the riddle may have different degrees of difficulty and are divided into simple, complex and chain. Simple riddles are one-term and contain one true link, one wrong link and one answer. If any of these components is developed, a riddle is complex. In chain riddles both the image part and the answer are polynomial [5, p. 256]. Concerning the structure of riddles Yu. Levin points to the structural nature of riddles, i. e. the riddle is a structural unit if it is “built using formal semantic mechanisms such as antithesis, contrast, pun, etc.” [6, p. 294]. Let us consider both Ukrainian and English riddles:

- *Що люблю – не куплю; чого не люблю – не продам* (Молодість і старість).
- *Білий, а не сніг; твердий, а не камінь; солодкий, а не мед* (Цукор).
- *Little Nancy Etticoat in a white petticoat and a red nose:
The longer she stands, the shorter she grows* (Candle).
- *What musical instrument will you not believe?* (Lyre).

A characteristic feature of modern linguistics is the dominance of cognitive-discursive paradigm. This is what makes the fact that to the forefront in research of riddles go out their cognitive-semiotic and discursive features [3, p. 202–203].

A high level of semantic and compositional integrity of riddles is achieved by the presence of two structural elements – the image part and the answer. Both parts are stable, coded and having almost identical semantic and structural characteristics that determine its semiotic nature. Indissoluble unity of the image part and the solution is based on cognitive-semantic isomorphes, the first part of which contains all the cognitive-relevant features of the second, and the second those of the first, which is reflected in their syntactic organization [4, p. 8, 14]. For example, consider the following Ukrainian riddles about fauna:

- *Іван-білобран в білу сорочку вбрався. Під землю сховався* (Часник).
- *Сидить Марушка в семи кожухах; хто на неї гляне, той і заплаче* (Цибуля).
- *Сидить баба на грядках, вся закутана в хустках* (Капуста).
- *Сидить дід у траві, голова в нього в крові* (Мухомор).

Unlike other relevant question-answer units, riddles are not formed spontaneously and are not produced in a particular situation, but operate mainly in unchanged form as a kind of stereotype. Both parts of the riddle are linked by one topic, but its content is always removed from the specific situation, which could cause a reaction and create an

effect that is not directly derived from the semantics of the expression and caused by the background knowledge of the addresser and the conditions of communication [4, p. 9].

The riddle lives in two contexts – addresser and addressee. A specific feature of the function of the riddles in speech is the presence, in addition to collective author-creator of the text of riddles, of the author of riddles updated by situation of communication that carries its references, links extra-textual and inside worlds and regulates the harmony of a dialogue in a folklore text. In the first part of the dialogue (the image part of a riddle) an addresser asks an addressee a question, expecting to receive a specific answer, the appearance of which is prepared by using (or not using) an interrogative word. The content and form of answer-cues is determined by the content and form of the first cue. The second part of the riddle, that is the answer, is formed in accordance with what has become the object of setting riddles and what syntactic structure was thus involved [4, p. 9].

Some linguists note that in the process of building their message under the rules of a particular speech genre, the addresser signals adequate perception of the communicative situation as a counterpart of the given speech genre, and thus he (the addresser) has positioned himself as the bearer of the corresponding status and makes it clear to the addressee that he wants to be perceived as the carrier of a particular speech role [8, p. 185].

Thus, two communicators act as “the one who sets a riddle” – the addresser and “the one who guesses a riddle” – the addressee. The addresser and addressee certainly swap roles as “any understanding provides the answer in one form or another and necessarily generates it: the listener becomes the speaker” [8]. We believe that communication between addresser and addressee is of unequal status because the addresser (in case he sets a riddle) takes a leading position within a given speech genre, because “the question is more important than the answer, and the one “who asks” is wiser than “the

person who guesses”, he does not need the answer that he knows but that the person who is guessing stands the test and finds the answer on his/her own...” [10, p. 56].

It is believed that in discursive considering of the speech genre it is advisable to consider the situation, context, communication channel, feedback, communicative noise, etc. [1, p. 57].

Note that the situation of communication does not affect the riddle, it affects only the nature of communicative intentions of the addresser, because “the riddle appears as <...> a whole text intended to be used in various situations as a finished product to achieve well-defined goals <...>”. As you know, the situation of setting riddles gives communicators the roles of the people who ask and answer the riddle and that is why the communicants should be familiar with the rules governing correct “playing” of ready dialogue of the riddle. As for the context, the text of the riddle remains in any case the same, it exists and is reproduced, as it was already stated in the finished form, so we can assume that the riddle does not depend on the context in which it is used” [8, p. 185].

However, taking into account the fact that the speech genre consists of speech acts (declarative, imperative and interrogative), “the role of context becomes more meaningful <...> for an adequate interpretation of illocutive power of expression, proper understanding of the expressed intention of the speaker...” [8, p. 186].

G. Pasko mentions that a genre of the riddle appears as a communicative phenomenon of discursive nature. It occupies an intermediate position in communication between declarative, interrogative and imperative speech acts that form it, and discourse in which it unfolds [8, p. 186].

Further and thorough research of integrated approach to the language of riddles seems promising. It includes the study of the material of foreign researchers and generalized-comparative separation of the leading aspects of research in modern linguistics.

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ЗАГАДКА ЯК ОБ'ЄКТ ЛІНГВІСТИЧНИХ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ

У статті зроблено спробу систематизувати різні лінгвістичні підходи до вивчення загадки та виокремити сучасні аспекти дослідження цього фольклорного жанру. Також розглянуто питання походження загадок.

Автор зазначає, що загадка живе та постійно розвивається в усній художній творчості кожного народу з давніх-давен. Ще Аристотель визнавав, що цей специфічний жанр фольклору – це вправно побудована метафора. У багатьох народів стародавнього світу цей жанр був засобом розвитку розумових здібностей підростаючого покоління.

Загадки характеризуються багатством та різноманітністю своєї тематики: про будову всесвіту, рослинний та тваринний світ, про людину, людське житло, їжу тощо.

Автор наголошує, що загадкам притаманні яскравість і конкретність факту, що робить їх особливо цікавими для дітей. У статті наведено приклади загадок, які відповідають психологічним особливостям сприйняття дитини.

Проте для мовознавців та фольклористів загадка – це не просто розвага, а комплексна лінгвістична та естетична структура. Системне наукове вивчення загадок дає багатий матеріал про мистецтво, культуру та мову. У статті також звернуто увагу на те, що мова фольклору і загадок є важливим об'єктом сучасної етнолінгвістики. Багато праць присвячено структурним, семантичним та прагматичним особливостям загадок, зокрема дослідження З. Волоцької, А. Головачової, О. Селіванової, Р. Жореса, Г. Онищенко та ін. Зазначено, що серед дослідників загадок прихильниками структурно-семантичного підходу до її вивчення є Е. Кенгес-Маранда та Ю. Левін. Автор акцентує увагу на сучасних підходах до вивчення загадки. На перший план у дослідженні загадки виходять когнітивно-семіотичні і дискурсивні особливості. Г. Пасько розглядає жанр загадки як комунікативне явище дискурсивної природи. Загадка живе у двох контекстах – адресанта і адресата.

У статті на численних прикладах проілюстровано різноманіття тематики цього жанру, наведено приклади загадок, побудованих на антитезі, контрасті та каламбурі. На прикладах загадок з української та англійської мов автор ілюструє нерозривну єдність образної частини та відгадки. Звернено увагу на те, що загадка функціонує в незмінній формі, як певний стереотип. Загалом у статті виокремлено ключові аспекти вивчення жанру загадки на сучасному етапі з лінгвістичного погляду.

Ключові слова: загадка, відгадка, лінгвістичний адресат, адресант, когнітивно-семіотичний, дискурсивний.

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