

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

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## Abstract

This article investigates the linguocultural characteristics of riddles formed on the basis of the lexeme *wind*. As a natural phenomenon, wind occupies a significant place in human life, folklore, and cultural consciousness. Wind-related riddles reflect not only the observable properties of wind but also the symbolic, cognitive, and cultural meanings associated with movement, power, freedom, and change. The study examines the semantic structure, figurative representation, symbolic interpretation, and cultural significance of wind-based riddles. The findings demonstrate that such riddles serve as an important means of preserving traditional knowledge and expressing the linguistic worldview of a community.

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

## Introduction

Language and culture are closely interconnected systems that influence and shape one another. Linguoculturology explores this relationship by examining how cultural values, beliefs, and experiences are reflected in language. Folklore genres, particularly riddles, provide valuable material for linguocultural analysis because they encode collective knowledge through metaphorical and symbolic language.

Natural phenomena frequently appear in riddles due to their visibility and significance in everyday life. Among them, wind is one of the most intriguing phenomena because it is invisible yet perceptible through its effects. Throughout history, people have associated wind with movement, strength, mystery, communication, and transformation. As a result, the lexeme *wind* has acquired rich cultural and symbolic meanings that are reflected in folklore traditions. The purpose of this article is to analyze the linguocultural characteristics of riddles based on the lexeme *wind* and to identify the cultural concepts embedded within their linguistic structure. In linguocultural studies, lexical units are regarded as carriers of cultural information. The lexeme *wind* functions not only as a meteorological term but also as a cultural symbol representing various aspects of human experience and perception.

Riddles are concise folkloric texts that describe objects and phenomena indirectly. They rely on metaphor, comparison, personification, and symbolic imagery. Understanding a riddle requires knowledge of both language and culture. Therefore, riddles constitute an important source for investigating the interaction between linguistic forms and cultural meanings.



The semantic structure of wind-related riddles is primarily based on the invisible yet perceptible nature of wind. Since wind cannot be seen directly, riddles often describe its movement and effects on surrounding objects.

Consider the following example:

*You hear me whistle,  
You see me sway the trees,  
But when you look for me,  
I disappear with ease.*

**Answer:** Wind

The semantic focus of this riddle lies in the paradoxical nature of wind. Although it cannot be observed directly, its presence is recognized through sound and movement.

Another example:

*I travel everywhere,  
Yet leave no footprints behind.  
I touch every corner of the world,  
But no one can hold me.*

**Answer:** Wind

This riddle highlights the mobility and intangibility of wind, emphasizing its dynamic character.

Wind carries numerous symbolic meanings across cultures. It is frequently associated with freedom, movement, change, energy, and communication between the earthly and spiritual worlds.

Example:

*I come and go without a door,  
I carry stories from shore to shore.  
Though no tongue belongs to me,  
I speak through every tree.*

**Answer:** Wind

In this riddle, wind symbolizes communication and connection. The imagery suggests that wind acts as a messenger carrying sounds, voices, and information across distances. In many cultural traditions, wind also symbolizes transformation and unpredictability because of its constantly changing nature. From a cognitive perspective, wind-based riddles reveal how people conceptualize an invisible natural phenomenon. Human cognition often relies on sensory experiences to understand wind, including hearing, touch, and observation of movement.

Example:

*I have no body,  
Yet I can dance.  
I have no hands,  
Yet I can move mountains of sand.*

**Answer:** Wind

This riddle demonstrates the use of personification as a cognitive mechanism. Wind is conceptualized as a living being capable of dancing and acting intentionally.



Such metaphorical representations help people understand abstract natural forces through familiar human experiences.

The cultural significance of wind varies according to geographical conditions and traditional lifestyles. For agricultural communities, wind may be associated with weather changes, crop growth, and seasonal transitions. For maritime cultures, wind plays a crucial role in navigation and travel.

In English-speaking folklore, wind is often portrayed as a mysterious and powerful force. It may symbolize adventure, destiny, freedom, or even supernatural activity.

Consider the following riddle:

*I race across valleys,  
Climb mountains high,  
Carry clouds through the heavens,  
And never stop to rest.*

**Answer:** Wind

This example reflects cultural perceptions of wind as a powerful and tireless force of nature. In many traditions, strong winds are interpreted as signs of change or messages from higher powers, demonstrating the spiritual dimension of wind symbolism.

The analysis demonstrates that the lexeme *wind* possesses considerable linguocultural significance. In riddles, wind is represented through metaphors, personifications, and symbolic images that reflect both universal human experiences and culture-specific interpretations. Because wind is invisible, it provides particularly rich opportunities for figurative language. As a result, wind-related riddles frequently rely on imagination and indirect description. They reveal how human beings conceptualize natural forces and assign cultural meanings to them. Moreover, while many cultures associate wind with movement and change, specific interpretations differ according to environmental conditions, historical traditions, and social values. This combination of universality and cultural specificity makes wind-based riddles a valuable object of linguocultural study.

The present study has shown that riddles formed on the basis of the lexeme *wind* possess distinctive linguocultural characteristics. Their semantic structure reflects the physical properties of wind, while their symbolic content conveys ideas of freedom, power, movement, communication, and transformation. Through metaphorical and personified representations, these riddles preserve cultural knowledge and contribute to the formation of a linguistic worldview.

Therefore, wind-based riddles represent an important source for understanding the relationship between language, culture, cognition, and folklore. Their analysis demonstrates how a natural phenomenon can become a complex cultural symbol embedded within traditional forms of expression.

## References

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