

UDC 81

https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/63/47

## STYLISTIC DEVICES COMMONLY USED IN ENGLISH RIDDLES

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### СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКИЕ ПРИЕМЫ, ОБЫЧНО ИСПОЛЬЗУЕМЫЕ В АНГЛИЙСКИХ ЗАГАДКАХ

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*Abstract.* True riddles consist of two parts, one functioning as a question, the other as an answer. In riddling the answerer or riddle tries to find an acceptable answer to the question. Sometimes riddles are deliberately misled because the “right” answer is completely unexpected. The article includes the definition of riddles, types of riddles and analysis of stylistic devices used in English riddles. Stylistic devices make our speeches more interesting and livelier and help us to get and keep our reader’s and listener’s attention. Stylistic devices often provide emphasis, freshness of expression, or clarity. In the article it is clarified three main levels of stylistic devices: phonetic, lexical and syntactical stylistic devices commonly used in English riddles.

*Аннотация.* Истинные загадки состоят из двух частей: одна — как вопрос, другая — как ответ. В загадках ответчик пытается найти приемлемый ответ на вопрос. Иногда загадки намеренно вводят в заблуждение, потому что «правильный» ответ совершенно неожидан. Статья включает определение загадок, типы загадок и анализ стилистических приемов, используемых в английских загадках. Стилистические приемы делают нашу речь более интересной и живой, помогают нам привлечь и удержать внимание читателей и слушателей. Стилистические приемы часто обеспечивают выразительность, свежесть изложения или ясность. В статье раскрыты три основных уровня стилистических приемов: фонетические, лексические, синтаксические и стилистические приемы, обычно используемые в английских загадках.

*Keywords:* riddle, stylistic devices, affinity, similarity, metaphorical question of similarity, rhyme, expression, contrasting concepts.

*Ключевые слова:* загадка, стилистические приемы, близость, метафорический вопрос сходства, сравнение, рифма, выражение, контрастирующие понятия.

Riddles are short pieces the basis of which is witty metaphorical question that provides the answer. To find the answer — solution of a riddle, one should know how to compare life phenomena on the base of their affinity or similarity due to signs, traits, or characteristics.

Riddles became an important element of art expression development, the formation part of observation, quick-wittedness and systemic views on the world. Riddles are irreplaceable in the development of thinking.

A riddle is a conditional dialogue in which one of the participants has to guess and name the

word or the sentence asked by other participant but named not directly but as a hint or as an allegory [1, p. 81].

A riddle consists of five elements: the given term (the core of the riddle image), the constant premises, the hidden variable, the given variable, the hidden term (the answer).

There are two main types of riddle:

*Enigma*: Enigmas are types of riddles that employ the use of allegorical or metaphorical devices. These riddles involve critical thinking and ingenuity on the solver's behalf in order to devise a solution. Example:

*I have a tail and a body, but I am not a snake. What am I?*

Answer = *Coin*

*Conundrum*: A conundrum is a riddle that relies on the use of puns in order to achieve its desired effect. Example:

*What kind of tree can you carry in your hand?*

Answer = *Palm Tree* (<https://clck.ru/TG84D>).

Specificity of riddles is that in their concealed allegorical form an object or phenomenon is encrypted and one should find its original meaning. An efficient solving of riddles promotes understanding of their linguistic and semantic structure. Researchers mention that "any riddle is a kind of logical task because it contains evident or hidden form, a question that you need to answer" [3, p. 233].

The Aim of the research: To understand more about the way English riddles are created.

The Objective of the research: To analyze in details stylistic devices used in English riddles.

#### *Methods of the research*

All the investigations are held with the help of investigation methods, and all the methods should be determined and chosen in connection with the topic investigated. In the investigation process of the given topic we have used the descriptive method and linguistic analysis method.

A stylistic use of a language unit acquires what we call a stylistic meaning, and a stylistic device is the realization of an already well-known abstract scheme designed to achieve a particular artistic effect. Stylistic devices are used in writing to make it more effective and persuasive.

Three main levels of stylistic devices are distinguished: phonetic, lexical and syntactical stylistic devices.

##### 1. Phonetic Stylistic Devices Commonly Used in English Riddles.

There are two common cases of rhyme in English riddles. They are full rhyme and incomplete rhyme. Rhyme is the use of words which end with the same sounds, usually at the end of lines.

###### a) *Full rhyme*

Rhyme can appear in different lines and in a line as well.

As soft as *silk*, as white as *milk*,

As bitter as *gall*, a thick green *wall*,

And a green coat covers me *all*. — A *walnut*

What do you call a chubby dog? — A *round hound*

What's a glove for a small cat? — A *kitten mitten*

###### b) *Incomplete rhyme*

What is the difference between a coat and a baby? - One you *wear*, one you *were* [3].

Rhyme is wonderful way to show art and riddle forming in English although not paying any role in the meaning of riddles. Specially, full rhyme in language is found in verse, and rhyme is formed within a sentence or a set of sentences.

2. Lexical Stylistic Devices Commonly Used In English Riddles: pun, metaphor, personification, simile, decomposition of set phrases and paradox.

a) Pun in English Riddles.

Puns are a form of word play which takes advantage of words, or similar sounding words, with multiple meanings, often to create a humorous situation or joke. Puns can sometimes be created unintentionally, in which case the saying 'no pun intended' is used. So pun is an idea or expression which has two meanings implied at the same time.

*Homophones as Pun.*

What kind of trees come in two's?

*Pear trees.*

Where do medieval soldiers study?

*At knight school.*

In noun homophones, there is a special case: homonym riddles.

Who did Uncle Bug marry?

*Aunt Ant.*

What do you say to a soldier in shining armor when he goes to bed?

*Night-night, Knight!*

*Full Homonyms as Pun*

Why do history books taste good?

- Because they're full of *dates*.

How do we know the ocean is friendly?

- It *waves*.

Why is coffee like the soil?

- It is *ground*.

*Metathesis as Pun*

What's the difference between a very short witch and a deer running from hunters?

*One's a stunted hag and the other's a hunted stag.*

*Spoonerism as Pun*

What is the difference between a fisherman and an angry schoolchild?

- One baits his hooks, while the other hates his books.

What is the difference between a wedding chapel and a restaurant's daily specials?

- One is a marrying venue, the other a varying menu.

*Palindrome as Pun*

What are three-letter words for mother, father, and a young child?

- Mum, dad, tot.

What verb is the same when being read upwards and backwards?

- Refer/pop/repaper.

b) Metaphor in English Riddles

Metaphor is two different things compared in a figurative sense.

*What has teeth but cannot eat? — A saw.*

*Many eyes and never a nose, one tongue, and about it goes. — A shoe.*

*I'm in heaven,*

*I'm in the sea,*

*also in the turquoises*

*and the peacock.*

The answer is *the blue color*.

*I am born and I die without ceasing;  
I still nonetheless exist  
and, without leaving my bed,  
I always find myself running.  
The answer is *the river*.*

c) Personification in English Riddles

The very common style of a riddle is personification, i.e. giving the subject of the riddle the qualities of a person, and then having it describe itself poetically. Personification is a figure of speech in which a thing – an idea or an animal — is given human attributes. The non-human objects are portrayed in such a way that we feel they have the ability to act like human beings. For example, when we say, “The sky weeps,” we are giving the sky the ability to cry, which is a human quality. Riddles often contain personification and provide an interesting means [2, p. 7].

*What did the hurricane say to the other hurricane?*

*I have my eye on you!*

Voiceless it cries,

Wingless flutters,

Toothless bites,

Mouthless mutters.

Answer: *Wind*.

This thing all things devour;

Birds, beasts, trees, flowers;

Gnaws iron, bites steel;

Grinds hard stones to meal;

Slays king, ruins town,

And beats mountain down;

Answer: *Time*.

d) Simile in English Riddles

Simile is an explicit comparison between two things using words such as like or as.

*When put on skin, it dries up, and looks like a sunburn a few days later.*

*What am I?*

Answer: *Glue!*

*Kings and queens may cling to power and the jester has his call. But as you may discover, the common one outranks them all. What is it?*

Answer: *An ace (card)*

*Round like the moon,*

*white as lime,*

*they make me milk,*

*And I do not tell you anymore!*

The answer is *cheese*.

e) Decomposition of Set Phrases in English Riddles

In English, there is the stylistic device called decompositions of set phrases, in which the whole meaning of the set phrase is understood literally.

What do singers always want to hit?

- Songs. They very much wish to have *hit songs*.

Which travels at greater speed, heat or cold?

- Heat, because you can *catch cold*.

When can a man be six feet tall and be short at the same time?

- When he is *short of money*.

What do you give a football player *with big feet*?

- Large shoes.

Who will be your real friend, a poor friend or a rich one?

- A poor friend, because *a friend in need is a friend indeed*.

f) Paradox in English Riddles.

Paradox is a statement that seems to be self-contradictory or opposed to common sense.

Paradoxical riddles are description in terms of action, for example, “*the man who made it did not want it; the man who bought it did not use it; the man who used it did not know it*”, and the answer is “*a coffin*”, or “*poor people have it, rich people want it, it is greater than God, but it is worse than Satan*”, the answer would definitely be “nothing”.

*What can go around the world while remaining in a corner?*

Answer: A *STAMP* — There is no pun or strong metaphor here; this riddle is nearly pure paradox.

*What is full of holes but still holds water?* (<https://clck.ru/TG84D>).

Answer: A *SPONGE* - Once again, this is a riddle that is pure paradox.

3. Syntactical Stylistic Devices Commonly Used In English Riddles.

In English riddles, syntactical devices are mostly based on peculiar syntactical arrangement. Namely, it is parallel construction.

a) Repetition in Parallel Construction.

Parallelism, also known as parallel structure, is when phrases in a sentence have similar or the same grammatical structure. In its most basic usage, parallelism provides a phrase with balance and clarity. Parallelism also serves to give phrases a pattern and rhythm.

b) Antithesis in Parallel Construction.

Antithesis is the use of contrasting concepts, words, or sentences within parallel grammatical structures. This combination of a balanced structure with opposite ideas serves to highlight the *contrast* between them.

Question:

*5 bricks construct me you'll find a candle in the middle.*

*I am the antithesis of heavy,*

*Without me you couldn't read the riddle. What am I?*

Answer: *Light* (<https://clck.ru/TG84D>).

### Conclusion

A riddle is an aphoristic work which consists of brief poetic, often rhymed expression, in which a certain object or phenomenon is represented by its metaphorical equivalent. Asking and answering is one of a wonderful way to communicate, especially riddles which are real nice serious questions, and the answers can be funny and make not much serious sense, yet they sound right. The riddle employs quite ordinary language in conventional ways to satisfy the demands placed upon it as the art form; that is the reason why riddles conform to a model of communication which is made up of a code and an encoded message that is first transmitted and then decoded [3].

The theoretical and practical value of the research is that riddles are analysed from the point of view of the linguistic picture of the world reflection in their text and distinguishing different types of riddles based on their stylistic interpretation.

Three main kinds of stylistic devices (phonetic, lexical, and syntactical stylistic devices) help

to make riddle more attracting and appealing. Of three kinds, lexical stylistic devices are the most popular one, with pun, metaphor, simile, decompositions of set phrases.

Today riddles aren't used as much as they were in ancient times, but they remain a definite way to get our mind working. Today riddles are almost completely developed into children's folklore. Containing an element of the game, which stimulates the imagination of those who are guessing, riddles impress children and perform cognitive and developmental functions (<https://clck.ru/TG84D>). In many nations this genre has always been the means of formation and development of mental abilities of young people, development the analysis ability and comparison of phenomena.

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Работа поступила  
в редакцию 14.01.2021 г.

Принята к публикации  
21.01.2021 г.

#### Ссылка для цитирования:

Aliyeva E. Stylistic Devices Commonly Used in English Riddles // *Бюллетень науки и практики*. 2021. Т. 7. №2. С. 411-416. <https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/63/47>

#### Cite as (APA):

Aliyeva, E. (2021). Stylistic Devices Commonly Used in English Riddles. *Bulletin of Science and Practice*, 7(2), 411-416. <https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/63/47>