

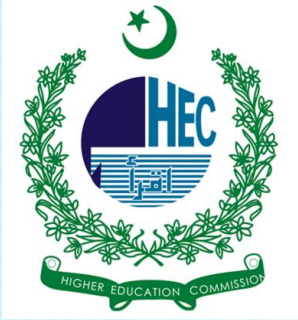
**Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review**

**Print ISSN: 3006-5887**

**Online ISSN: 3006-5895**

**<https://llrjournal.com/index.php/11>**

**Cultural Reflections in Urdu Riddles: A Stylistic Analysis**



**<sup>1</sup>Syeda Sarah Ali Kazmi**

**<sup>2</sup>Syeda Afifa Hassan Kazmi**

**<sup>3</sup>Robina Shaheen**

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Department of Linguistics and Literature,  
University of Haripur.

<sup>2</sup>Elementary Teacher Department of Education,  
Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan.

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, Department of Linguistics and Literature,  
University of Haripur.

**Abstract**

This paper explores the cultural manifestations within Urdu riddles by employing a qualitative and descriptive research approach. Drawing data from diverse sources including the 'Jagmag Mooti' magazine, the book 'Paheliyon ki Dunia', and online platforms, the study randomly selected 100 Urdu riddles. These riddles were transcribed by using the International Phonetic Association (IPA) guidelines. The stylistics analysis was carried out in order to explore the intricate nuances of language, symbolism, and cultural expressions embedded within these riddles by following the stylistic analysis levels outlined by Alabi (2007). The riddles were categorized into five major groups based on their functions in representing the culture of the Urdu-speaking community. The analysis revealed that Urdu riddles play a significant role in reflecting various aspects of the user's culture, including traditional foods, death rituals, religious practices, outdoor games, and essential household items. Examples such as 'Jharu' (broom), 'Gulab Jaman' (a sweet dish), 'Dua' (prayer), 'Janaza' (funeral), 'Gulli Danda' (a traditional game) were identified as subjects that showcase the cultural richness embedded in Urdu riddles. Consequently, this study asserts that Urdu riddles serve as a valuable source for gaining insights into the social, cultural, religious and traditional dimensions of the Urdu-speaking society.

**Keywords:** Urdu Riddles, Lexico-Syntactic Patterns, Morphological patterns, Phonological Patterns, Culture.

**Introduction**

Riddles are an important and interesting part of a folk literature, which helps in displaying culture of a particular society vividly and colorfully. They are in verse form therefore; they are quite easy to be learnt or memorized. Moreover, they include indirect deliberation of a visual thing, which cannot directly tell the actual name or answer of the referred thing easily. They represent various aspects of a culture and deal with subjects or topics that reflect the thinking and environment of a particular society in which they are uttered (Gachanja, 2013). So, when asked a riddle, one tends to look at his/her surroundings or culture in order to connect the ideas or thoughts to unpuzzle the riddle.

# **Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review**

**Print ISSN: 3006-5887**

**Online ISSN: 3006-5895**

In Urdu, enigmatic and perplexing questions or statements, known as 'pəheli:ja:n', serve as riddles. These riddles are articulated by the speaker or riddler and the listener patiently considers and comprehends them. Additionally, Urdu riddles are employed for the purpose of amusement, recreation and inducing laughter. Children are commonly presented with riddles to enhance their cognitive abilities. Beyond being a source of entertainment, these riddles offer insights into our culture, portraying aspects of social, cultural, religious and traditional life of our society. Riddles are crafted to stimulate and actively involve participants in the process of solving them. While riddles serve the primary function of engaging and entertaining, they also fulfill other roles such as reflecting cultural values, teaching about the environment, people, food, social norms, religious practices and the surrounding milieu. This underscores the significance of riddles not only in unveiling cultural aspects but also in encapsulating various facets of a community. Therefore, this study aims to explore how Urdu riddles illuminate the culture of the society in which they are shared and the diverse subjects encapsulated within these Urdu riddles.

## **Literature Review**

Awedoba (2000) in his study "*Social role of riddles with reference to Kasena society*" investigated the role of riddles and aspects of verbal arts in African communities using Kasena as the Case study. The investigator pointed out that riddles play an important social role such as cultural, cosmological, intellectual, political and ideological. Furthermore, the study argued that riddles exercise intellect, teach logic and engage the audience in variety of different paradoxes and enigmas, teaching them about biology, social norms, cultural/social environment and much more. In addition, the researcher concluded about riddles that they are significant in building creative thinking among the Kasena children, helping them to acquire about their language and social structures.

Gwaravanda (2008) in his article "*Shona Reasoning Skills in Zimbabwe: The Importance of Riddles*" highlighted the significance of riddles in Shona educational system. The paper focused on the functions of riddles in sharpening one's reasoning skills and attempted to show how riddles enable quick mental flexibility on the part of the child as he/she tackles with different possibilities and probabilities in searching for the correct answers to the riddles being asked. The researcher claimed that riddles

## **Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review**

**Print ISSN: 3006-5887**

**Online ISSN: 3006-5895**

play a central role in sharpening and building good reasoning skills among young. While looking for answers to riddles, the researcher examined that Shona children are challenged to think deeply and abstractly, uncovering figurative language gives them a chance to go through reasoning process. In addition, the researcher added that riddles help in building a person's reasoning skills and intellectualness. In Shona society, riddles are a source to encourage logical skills. Those who solve more riddles are said to be more mentally sophisticated than the rest. Moreover, investigator added that by attempting to solve the riddle a child acquires mental flexibility while looking for the right answers to given riddles. The whole process of riddling includes logical inferences and answers to riddles are based on valid and reasoned analysis thus, Shona riddles train reasoning skills and provoke thoughts in mind leading to comprehend reality effectively.

Kihara (2013) in his article *'On mchongoano and Riddles in Kenya'* did comparative analysis of these two genres. In the article researcher compared the traditional riddles in Kenya with mchongoano. The data on riddles was collected from the Kikuyu community. The study of functions and characteristics of both the genres were the main aim of the investigation. The researcher compared both genres and concluded that both share common functions like entertainment, development of verbal skills, education, information and socialization. Further, both are of relative length and posed mostly by the young ones in an effort to produce entertainment and humor. While talking about the significant difference, Kihara (2013) pointed out that difference in both these genres are the language they use. Mchongoano has aspect of Sheng and code switching/mixing mostly used by the youth while traditional riddles are used by people of all age though they have archaic language and senseless words (Finnegan (1970:437)). Furthermore, the researcher predicted that Mchongoano in future will replace the traditional riddles as a leisure activity as practitioners of this particular genre are young people. According to the investigator, as soon as young people will enter adulthood mchongoano will take place of their folklore. The researcher further added that socio-cultural and urbanization change in the society will lead to the use of 'sheng' an urban language, popular among the young generation to leave behind traditional riddles as they seem to be no longer popular among young considering the fact that riddling session has changed because

## **Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review**

**Print ISSN: 3006-5887**

**Online ISSN: 3006-5895**

grandparents and adults are no more available for interaction. Thus, conclusion drawn from the study was that Mchongoano is an important part of national folklore of Kenya.

Tizazu (2019) in “*A Critical Investigation on the Cultural Role of Western Gurage Riddles*” aimed to collect, analyze and interpret Western Gurage riddles. The study was descriptive in nature and the tools used for analysis of the data were document analysis and interview. Nine riddles were chosen and translated into English using Literal approach. Random sampling technique was used to collect informants from Western people and documents. In order to study the functions of riddles and their answers descriptive and functional approach was adopted. After analyzing the data, the study revealed that Western Gurage community in their riddles represents their traditional foods. Children become familiar with the traditional foods and drinking throughout the riddling process. As riddle is a game to win the riddler associates riddles with different things from different aspects, enabling riddle to know their traditional foods and drinking. The study showed that *Bulla*, *Enset*, *Cabbage*, *Zemuamujate* and *Sehar* were some of the foods represented in Gurage riddles. Another cultural role drawn from the study of Western Gurage riddles was that it teaches and reflects the cultural materials that Gurage people in general and the Western community in particular uses to perform in their daily routine activities.

Basumatary and Hussain (2020) did “*A Comparative Study of Riddles on Livelihood between the Bodo and Assamese Society*”. It was a comparative and descriptive study of Bodo and Assamese riddles. The data was obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from informants whereas; secondary data was collected mainly from magazines, journals, mouthpieces and reference books. The study showed that in both Bodo and Assamese folk literature riddles play an important and interesting role. Children are often asked to solve the riddles which make their brainpower increased. Furthermore, the researchers examined that Bodo and Assamese riddles are mainly depending on their crops. By comparing Bodo and Assamese riddles, researcher concluded that both are same in terms of their themes and contexts. Through these riddles, the picture of livelihood is reflected colorfully in both Bodo and Assamese riddles.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The analysis of Urdu riddles will utilize Alabi's (2007) stylistic analysis model. This model examines text and discourse across multiple levels, encompassing graphological, morphological, lexico-syntax and phonological aspects, as detailed below:

#### **Lexico-Syntactic Patterns**

This aspect of the framework focuses on the lexical and syntactic structures employed in discourse. It examines how words are chosen and arranged to convey meaning, including considerations of vocabulary choice, sentence structure, and grammatical features.

#### **Phonological Patterns**

The phonological component of the framework explores the sounds and pronunciation patterns present in discourse. It delves into aspects such as phonetic features, intonation, rhythm, and stress patterns, which contribute to the oral expression and reception of language.

#### **Morphology Patterns**

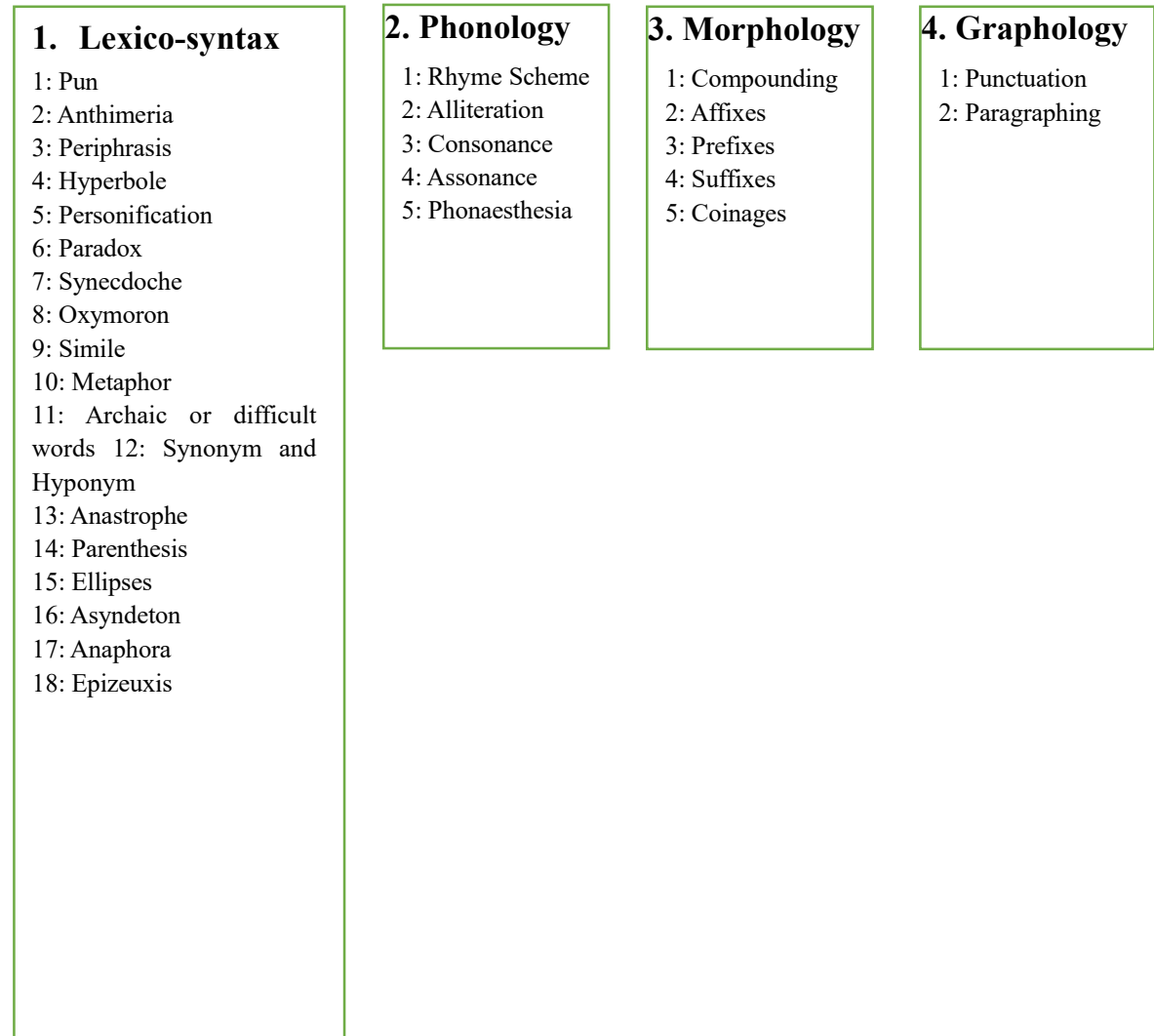
The morphological analysis delves into the processes of word formation, exploring the subjects, conditions and rules that govern affixation. This examination encapsulates the study of affixation, compounding, and coining processes, aiming to understand how new words emerge.

#### **Graphological Patterns**

Graphological analysis involves studying the visual aspects of written language, including typography, layout, and other graphic elements. This component of the framework explores how graphical features are used to convey meaning, emphasis, and stylistic effects in written discourse.

Alabi's framework offers a comprehensive approach to understanding discourse by examining the interplay between lexical, syntactic, morphological, phonological, and graphological elements. By analyzing these patterns, choices, and devices, researchers gain insight into the complex dynamics of language use in various communicative contexts.

Four Levels of Stylistic Analysis



**Fig. 1: Alabi's stylistic model, 2007**

**Research Objectives**

1. To examine the nuanced ways in which Urdu riddles, as linguistic expressions, intricately reflect the rich cultural elements within the Urdu-speaking society.
2. To explore and uncover the subjects and ideas encompassed within Urdu riddles, aiming to provide insights into the multifaceted aspects of the Urdu-speaking society.

**Research Questions**

The study addresses the following questions:

# **Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review**

**Print ISSN: 3006-5887**

**Online ISSN: 3006-5895**

1. In what ways do Urdu riddles as linguistic expressions intricately reflect the rich cultural elements within the Urdu-speaking society?
2. What subjects and ideas are encompassed within Urdu riddles, offering insights into the multifaceted aspects of the Urdu-speaking society?

## **Research Methodology**

The objective of this study was to examine how culture is portrayed in Urdu riddles. Utilizing a qualitative approach and a descriptive research design, random forty-five riddles from diverse sources such as internet, Urdu riddles book 'Pahelion ki dunia,' and the weekly magazine 'Jagmag mooti' were selected. These chosen riddles, initially written in Roman script, were transcribed using the International Phonetic Association (IPA). Furthermore, they were translated into English and meticulously analyzed to discern their depiction of various subjects, topics, and cultural elements within the Urdu speaking society. The study delved into riddles related to significant household items, explored those reflecting popular food items, investigated religious aspects, shed light on death rituals and lastly, examined riddles reflecting prevalent outdoor games of our culture.

## **Results**

### **Cultural Reflection in Urdu Riddles**

The results were divided into five sections. The first section deals with subjects that reflects our household items. The second section deals with riddles which reflects our popular food items. Similarly, third section deals with riddles reflecting religion, fourth reflects our death rituals and lastly, riddles reflecting outdoor games are discussed in the fifth section.

### **Riddles Reflecting Household Items**

People in our culture are mainly inhabitants of rural areas. They need various household items in order to perform their works from dawn till night. With the help of those utensils, they are in ease and position to do tasks easily. We get many examples of household items which our women use in their daily life routine some of which are discussed below:



# Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

## I. (a) Seedhi chalon tairhi chalo

si:di tʃəlū terʰi tʃəlū

Straight go crooked go

*'Straight and crooked I go'*

Kamar lon kas

kəmər lōn kəs

waist take

tight

*'Tight my waist'*

Jo bhi is ka naam bataye

dzo bi is ka na:m bəʃa:e

Whosoever of that name tell:

*'Whosoever tells its name'*

Ruppay Do das

rope Dū dəs

Rupees Give ten

*'Give ten rupees'*

*Answer: Jhaaru (broom)*

Riddle number (1a) is referring to an important household item which is a broom or '*dʒʰa:ɾu*' in Urdu. It is a cleaning item which is made of twigs or straws attached to a long wooden handle. *dʒʰa:ɾu* is used for the purpose of cleaning floors, roof or walls which have cobwebs or spiders. Moreover, this household item is also used to sweep off the dirt and garbage from places who need to be cleaned. Broom plays a significant role in villages where people have their courtyard, open spaces and floor to clean so, broom helps in cleaning up those places. Women in our society wakes up early in the morning and their first and foremost activity to do after breakfast is to clean their houses or courtyards with broom. So, broom plays a significant role, as it reflects an important household item of our daily life routine.

1 (b) Kaala ghoraGori Sawaari

Ka:la gʰoragori səwa:ɾi

Black horseWhite Passenger

# Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

*'Black horse with white passenger'*

Aik Ky bad aik ki Baari

ek kɛ bəd ɛk kɪ ba:ɾi

One of the after one of Turn

*'One turn after another'*

*Answer: Tawwa aur Roti (pan and bread)*

Similarly, pan and flat bread represents an important aspect of our culture. Women in our culture makes "roti/flat bread" on a pan which is called 'təva' in Urdu. Roti is eaten with daal or curries in our culture and it is made by putting it on təva. People in our culture utilize this utensil to make their food especially 'roti' for the lunch and dinner. So, this utensil is widely prevalent in our culture and it is an important household item which our women use in their daily life routine in order to make food for their families.

## Riddles Reflecting Our Popular Food Items

Food is an important aspect of a culture. The culture of a particular society is reflected by their food, drinks and food habits. As we grow up eating food of our own culture so our food depicts who we are. Similarly, many of these foods recalls our childhood memories, it ties us in our gatherings or to families and holds a special value too. Therefore, food is a significant part of a culture. Some traditional foods are passed down from one generation to the next and it displays our cultural identity. Below mentioned riddles are examined to see how riddles reflect popular food items of our culture.

2. (a) Daikhne main hai na phool na phal

d̪e:kʰne mɛ̃ he nã pʰu:l nã pʰəl

to see in is no flower no fruit

*'When we see it, it is neither a flower nor a fruit'*

Kehne ko hai aik phool aik phal

Kehne ko he ɛk pʰu:l ɛk pʰəl

to say to is a flower a fruit

*'When we say it, it is a flower and a fruit'*

*Answer: Gulab Jaman*

*Gulab dzamən* is a very famous and delicious sweet which is berry like in size and

## Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

it is dipped into flavored rose sugar syrup. It is often decorated with dried nuts to develop the taste or to enhance the presentation. This popular dessert is often eaten at various festivals, birthdays or in major celebrations like that of marriages, engagements or at Muslims festival of Eid ul-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. This popular sweet holds an important place in our culture as it is eaten in most important events of joy and happiness therefore, this food item serves an important role in reflecting culture of our society.

2. (b) Ghoom ghoom kyhui tiyaar

g<sup>h</sup>u:m g<sup>h</sup>u:m kɛ hui t̪ja:r

roam of got ready

*'Got ready while roaming around'*

Sab Ko Ahay Is pe Piyaar

səb Ko Ae is pɛ pija:r

all To Come This on love

*'Everyone loves it'*

*Answer: Jalaibi*

Similarly, riddle number (2b) is reflecting a very famous dessert which is sugary, soothing, round in shape and very addictive. *dʒələbi:* is a very common sweet in our culture which is hard from outside but when you bite it with your teeth, it is syrupy. This popular sweet is either served hot or cold. In Pakistan, people usually like eating '*dʒələbi:*' in Ramadan after opening their fast as it helps them in overcoming the sugar level in the body.

2 (c) Pehle Har Koi Shoq se kha le

pehlɛ hɛr koɪ ʃok sɛ kʰa lɛ

first Every someone interest from eats

*'Firstly, everyone eats it with interest'*

Baad main khoon ugalta jaye

bɑ:ɖ mɛ̃ kʰu:n uɡəltɑ dʒəɛ

Later on blood spits goes

*'Later spits out the blood'*

*Answer: Paan*

Riddle number (2c) is referring to a very popular food item which is '*pā:n*'. The

consumption of 'pā:n' in Pakistan has been a very popular cultural traditional especially in Muhajir families, where various 'pā:ns' are consumed throughout the entire day. In general, 'pā:n' is thoroughly enjoyed by our people and it is exclusively bought from street vendors. pā:n is basically made with betel leaf along with areca nuts in it and its widely consumed throughout Pakistan. Its betel leaf is grown in many areas of Pakistan but specifically in the coastal areas of Sindh. It is also imported from different countries in large quantities. Similarly, pā:n business is handled by muhajir traders, who after the independence in 1947, migrated from India to Pakistan. In Punjab, the culture of chewing 'pā:n' is widely spread as its shop is seen in almost every street and market. Moreover, the famous 'Anarkali Baza:r' in Lahore has a street with name 'Pa:n gali' where 'pā:n' is sold in large amount daily. So, this food item is also a reflection of our culture.

### **Riddles Reflecting Our Religion**

Religion shapes a culture. It is social-cultural system of morals, values, practices behaviors, social norms and prophecies. Similarly, religion gives people sense of identity. Every culture has its own set of rules, worship styles, beliefs, ways of living and proceeding in a society according to their religion. So, comprehending religion basically implies examining human culture. Following riddles are selected in order to examine how riddles reflect religion of its users.

3. (a) Choro Mat tum is ka Hath  
tʃoro mʌt tʊm is kʌ hʌtʰ  
leave don't you of that Hand  
*'Don't let go of his hand'*

Le lo is ko hathon hath  
lɛ lo is ko hʌtʰõ hʌtʰ  
take it It hand in hand

*'Take it hand in hand'*

Chupkay chupkay Arsh pejaye  
tʃʊpkɛ tʃʊpkɛ ɔɾʃ pɛdʒɛ  
Secretly Sky to goes

*'Secretly goes to the sky'*

## Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Tohfay le ke farsh per aye

Tohfɛ lɛ kɛ fərʃ pɛ æ

Gifts brings it floor on comes

*'Brings gifts on the floor'*

*Answer: Dua (prayers)*

doa: means “*appeal*” or “*invocation*”. It is a prayer of appeal, supplication and request. Muslims regard ‘*doa:*’ as the most intense act of worship. Through ‘*doa:*’ we communicate with our creator Allah (SWT). The act of making ‘*doa:*’ is of great significance in our culture. It is the most empowering conversation an individual can have with his creator. Similarly, to please Allah (SWT), to obey him or in any kind of difficulty in order to seek his mercy upon us we make *doa:* In every up and down of our lives, we seek mercy from Allah and hope he listens and gives what we desire in life. Moreover, *doa:* is made after wudu, prayers or after adhan holding same strength. In addition, Muslims believe that ‘*doa:*’ can change their life or fate and it is the only motivation of never giving up in life and to remain hopeful. So, the above riddle is reflecting a very significant aspect of our religion.

3 (b) Suraj ky jaane per teen

sɔrədʒ ke dʒɑ:nə pər

ti:n

Sun of to go on three

*'It is three when the sun*

*goe*

Suraj ky ane per do

sɔrədʒ ke anē pər dʒo

sun of comes on two

*'It is two, when the sun*

*comes'*

Sadiyon se hota aya hai

sədʒijō se hoʔɑ aʒɑ he

centuries from would have came is

*'It has been happening from centuries'*

Aur qayamat taq yeh ho

or kəjɑmɑt tɑk jɛ he

and day of judgement till this be

*'And this will happen till day of*

*judgement'*

*Answer: Panch numazain (five prayers)*

Similarly, riddle number (3b) is referring to the second pillar of Islam which is 'Sala:t', also known as 'nəmaz' in Urdu. It is a spiritual and physical act of worship that is performed five times a day at appointed times. There are five prayers which are obligatory in our religion. *Fajar* which is the dawn prayer. *Dhuhr*, that is early afternoon prayer. *Asar* is late afternoon prayer while *Magrib* and *Isha* are prayed after sunset. So above riddle is reflecting our religion by referring to those five prayers in the lines, that are obligatory in our culture and which ensures faith, increases taqwa and devotion to Allah SWT.

3 (c) Jis Ky paon ky nechay aye

dʒɪs ke pəð ke ni:tʃe ae

Which Of foot of under comes

*'When it comes under someone's feet'*

## Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Kano se woh hath lagaye  
ka:nõ se wo ha:t<sup>h</sup> lægae  
Ears from he hand touches

*'He touches ears with hands'*

*Answer: Jae namaz (prayer Mat)*

Riddle number (3c) is referring to an important item, which is a necessity while we perform 'sala:t'. A prayer mat also known as 'dʒa:e nəmaz' in Urdu language, is a piece of fabric or a pile carpet which is used by Muslims when they are to offer prayers. These mats are woven in a rectangular shape, decorated with beautiful images and patterns. Mostly images are of Islamic landmarks such as the 'Ka:ba' or any other mosques but there are no such animate objects woven on it as they are forbidden. Moreover, prayer mats are placed on the ground which is free from impurities or dust. Muslims before praying do wudu (ablution), and then stand on prayer mat to perform salah. Prayer mat is a compulsion when we have to offer prayer as it ensures that the place we are standing to perform salat is free from all impurities. So, riddle number (3c) is reflecting an important aspect of our religion.

### Riddles Reflecting Our Death Rituals

Death is inevitable and universal to all human beings of every culture. Every living being has to face the taste of death however, death rituals may vary depending on religious, cultural traditions, norms and beliefs of a particular society. Every society has its own rituals on birth, marriage, and death. The following Urdu riddles show death rituals that occurs in our culture.

4 (a) Chaar pae aik sawaar  
tʃa:r pa:e ek sawa:r  
bedframe one rider

*'Bedframe with one rider'*

Pechay banday beshumaar  
pɪtʃe bənde beʃʊma:r  
behind people countless

*'Countless people behind'*

*Answer: Janaza (funeral)*

Lastly, riddle number (4a) is referring to the Islamic funeral prayer, also known as

'*džanaza*' in Urdu language. *džanaza* is a significant part of our Islamic funeral ritual. It is an obligatory prayer which is prayed in congregation, to seek pardon, for the deceased Muslims. The dead body is placed on a bedframe at the very front of the place where *džanaza* is to be held. Moreover, the people who come to offer prayers stand in rows whereas *Imam* stands alone in the front facing the '*Qiblah*'. The prayer includes recitation of different surahs, people pray to God to bestow the deceased Muslim with peace, mercy and blessings. So, the whole idea of the Islamic funeral is reflected in the above riddle.

- 4 (b) Aik kapra aisay kehlaya  
ek kəpra esa kela:ja  
One Cloth such called  
*'There is one such cloth called'*  
Waqt ane per jab mangwaya  
waqt anē pər dzab mənwa:ja  
Time come on when ordered  
*'When the time came it was ordered'*  
Aap na pehne jo bhi laaye  
a:p na penε dzo bi: la:ε  
You no wear whoever brings  
*'Whosoever brings it, you don't wear!'*  
Jo pehnay khud daikh na paaye  
dzo penε k<sup>h</sup>ud dε:k<sup>h</sup> nā pa:ε  
Who wears himself see notfinds  
*'Who wears can't see for themselves'*  
*Answer: Kafan (shroud)*

Riddle number (4b) is referring to our important death ritual which is shrouding. The dead body in our culture is wrapped in a white simple cloth "*kəfən (shroud)*" after giving it a *Ghusal* (washing the deceased Muslim). It is compulsion in our culture to wash the deceased Muslim, the family and relatives of the departed soul make sure that the dead body is washed, keeping in mind the Islamic rights to wash the deceased. Similarly, *kəfən (shroud)* should be a simple white material, extravagant or any expensive material is not recommended to wrap the deceased one. Moreover, the body



is kept in *kāfan* (shroud) for many hours, allowing the well-wishers to come see, mourn and to console the family of the deceased one.

### **Riddles Reflecting Outdoor Games**

Games play an integral role in all cultures of the world. They are the oldest forms of social interactions. Games are expressions of joy, which allows people to do physical activities. Games are played for different purposes such as for entertainment, to kill leisure time, for prescribed goals or to compete with one another. In addition, games which are quite frequently played in a culture are passed down from one generation to the next, as they depict who we are and what we prefer to play. The following Urdu riddles reflect our outdoor games.

5 (a) Khala chaali hawa ke sath

K<sup>h</sup>ala tʃaːli həwa ke saṯ<sup>h</sup>

Aunt went Air of with

*'Aunt went with the air'*

Inki chutia mery hath

in ki tʃʊtja mere haṯ<sup>h</sup>

their braid my hand

*'Their braid is in my hands'*

*Answer: Patang (kite)*

Riddle (5a) is reflecting an important outdoor game which people in our culture play, that is flying a kite. Kite-flying is a popular traditional game which is played mostly by children and adults in our culture. Children usually make kites in their homes with the help of bamboo and paper or they buy it from a shop. Similarly, there is a string tied with it, so the person flying the kite has a grip on the kite and doesn't let it go. Sometimes it is played with a partner, who helps in holding the string to which the kite is attached as it is much easier this way to retrieve the kite. Moreover, in our county a very popular seasonal festival '*Basant*' is also enjoyed in spring season, where flying kites is quite prevalent. So, this outdoor game reflects our culture.

5 (b) Aik danday ky sath aik anda

ek dəndə ke sa:ṯ<sup>h</sup> ek ənda

One stick of with one egg

*'One stick with an egg'*

## Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

Anda bhagay khaa ke danda  
ənda b<sup>h</sup>a:ge k<sup>h</sup>a kɛ dənda  
Egg runs eats of stick  
*'The egg runs after eating a stick'*

*Answer: Gulli danda*

The riddle 5(b) is referring to an important outdoor game which is played in most rural areas and small towns of our country. *goli: dānda* is basically a game played with two wooden sticks. One is a larger stick that is called '*dānda*' while second stick is a bit smaller known as '*goli:*'. Similarly, there are four or more players but usually in even numbers to play this game. The players of this game stand in a round circle, the hitter balances the *goli:* on a stone. After balancing the *goli:* player uses the *dānda* to hit it, which results in flipping *goli:* in the air. While *goli:* is in the air, the player hits the *goli:* as hard as possible so that it goes far away. Once *goli:* is stricken, the player then runs to a pre-agreed point, located outside the circle, before an opponent retrieves the *goli:*

From the above discussion it can be seen that language of riddles reflect culture of its users. Urdu riddles are a source to have an insight of our culture, as they reflect social, cultural, religious and traditional life of our society. They reflect in them various household items that are prevalent in our culture and people in our society use them to do their daily routine tasks. Similarly, Urdu riddles are a source to look into traditional foods which passes down from one generation to the next. They reflect our culture as they represent who we are and displays our cultural identity too. Furthermore, Urdu riddles have in them subjects and ideas related to our religion. They acquire in them subjects which are reflection of our moral values, practices, behaviors, social norms and prophecies. So, they are a way to look into religious aspect of our culture as well. Moreover, our death rituals and outdoor games are also reflected in our riddles, which brings us deep insight of our culture.

### Conclusion

The research explores the linguistic dimensions of Urdu riddles, with specific focus on their reflection of culture of its users. The discussion initiates by delving into the analysis and interpretation of Urdu riddles, highlighting their pivotal role in representing various cultural aspects. The researcher examines different categories of

# Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

riddles, starting with those that showcase essential household items. The findings suggest that Urdu riddles effectively portray commonplace household items that play a crucial role in daily routines within our culture. Additionally, the study investigates riddles related to popular sweets, offering a distinctive perspective on traditional foods that persist across generations and serve as a reflection of our cultural identity. Moreover, the research underscores the incorporation of religious subjects in riddles, providing insights into moral values, practices, behaviors, social norms, and prophecies. This exploration positions riddles as a medium for understanding the religious facets of our society. The study also explores riddles depicting death rituals, illustrating their adherence to Islamic teachings and emphasizing the impact of religion on cultural practices. Finally, the researcher examines outdoor games embedded in our culture, asserting that these games, frequently played and passed down through generations, act as reflections of our cultural heritage. In conclusion, the study posits that Urdu riddles go beyond being mere linguistic expressions; they serve as invaluable windows into the diverse dimensions of the Urdu-speaking society. These riddles offer rich insights into social dynamics, cultural nuances, religious practices and traditional heritage within the community.

## References

- Alabi, V. A. (2007): *Lexico-Syntactic, Phonological and Graphological Patterns Choices and Devices in Discourse*. O. Obafemi, G. A. Ajadi, V. A. Alabi (eds.). *Critical Perspectives on English Language & Literature*. Ilorin: The Department of English, University of Ilorin.
- Awedoba, A. K. (2000). Social roles of riddles, with reference to Kasena society. *Institute of African Studies Research Review*, 16(2), 35-51.
- Basumatary, D. & Hussain, I. (2020). A comparative study of riddles on livelihood between the Bodo and Assamese Society. *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*. 7(1), 449-456.
- Finnegan, R. (1970). *Oral Literature in Africa*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Gachanja, M. W., & Kebaya, C. (2013). Pedagogical Aspects of Riddles: A Critical Examination of Abagusii Riddles. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 3(3), 293-298.
- Gwaravanda, E. T., & Masaka, D. (2008). Shona Reasoning Skills in Zimbabwe: The

**Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review**

**Print ISSN: 3006-5887**

**Online ISSN: 3006-5895**

Importance of Riddles. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 2(5), 193- 207.

Kihara, C. P. (2013). On mchongoano and riddles in Kenya. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 6(6), 100-121.

Tizazu, S. B. (2019). A Critical Investigation on the Cultural Role of Western Gurage Riddles. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 9(9), 328-333.