

REPRESENTATION ON THE CONCEPT PROFESSION
IN ENGLISH FOLK RIDDLES

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Abstract. This study examines the representation of the profession concept in English folk riddles from semantic and linguocultural perspectives. Riddles are analyzed as cognitively complex paremiological units that encode meaning through indirect nomination, metaphorical description, and functional semantics. The research demonstrates that profession-related riddles do not explicitly name occupations; instead, they construct professional identity through characteristic actions, tools, clothing, responsibilities, and social roles.

Keywords: Riddle, Profession, English folk riddles, Linguoculturology; Paremiology.

Riddles occupy a significant place in English oral folklore as compact yet cognitively complex linguistic units that encode knowledge through indirect nomination and figurative representation. Among the various thematic domains reflected in English folk riddles, the concept of professions represents an important cultural and social category. Profession-related riddles do not merely describe occupational roles; they construct semantic models of social identity, labor value, and community function through metaphorical and functional language.

The concept of professions in English folk riddles is typically expressed through indirect descriptive strategies rather than explicit naming. Instead of directly identifying an occupation, riddles foreground characteristic actions, tools, clothing, or responsibilities associated with a particular profession. This semantic concealment creates cognitive tension between description and referent, encouraging analytical reasoning and associative thinking. Through such mechanisms, riddles transform everyday social roles into intellectual challenges.

From a semantic perspective, profession-related riddles are predominantly structured around functional description. Occupational identity is encoded through activities such as healing, teaching, building, protecting, or creating. In many cases, attributive markers — such as a white coat, a hammer, or a chalkboard — serve as symbolic indicators of professional belonging. Logical contrast and metaphorical expressions further enrich the semantic structure, emphasizing the social contribution and practical significance of different professions.

From a linguocultural standpoint, the representation of professions in English folk riddles reflects societal attitudes toward labor, specialization, and responsibility. The

emphasis is often placed on productivity, service, and clearly defined social roles, illustrating the pragmatic orientation of English cultural thought. Thus, profession-related riddles function not only as verbal puzzles but also as linguistic models that encode collective perceptions of social hierarchy and occupational value.

Therefore, the study of the representation of the concept of professions in English folk riddles contributes to a deeper understanding of semantic modeling, cognitive mechanisms of indirect nomination, and the interaction between language, culture, and social structure. It reveals how folklore discourse transforms professional identity into a culturally meaningful and cognitively engaging construct.

I wear a white coat and carry a pen,
I listen to hearts again and again.
When you are sick, I help you feel better —
Who am I?

Answer: Doctor

I stand in front and write with chalk,
I help young minds to read and talk.
I open doors you cannot see —
Who could I be?

Answer: Teacher

I build your house both strong and tall,
But I don't live inside at all.
With bricks and tools I shape your space —
Name my trade and name my place.

Answer: Builder

When flames rise high into the sky,
I rush in while others fly.
With water strong, I fight the red —
What profession lies ahead?

Answer: Firefighter

I wear a badge and keep the peace,
I help when troubles never cease.
I guard the streets both day and night —
Who am I in uniform bright?

Answer: Police Officer

With pots and pans I work all day,
Mixing flavors in my own way.
From simple food to dishes grand —
Who am I with spoon in hand?

Answer: Chef

I plant the seeds and watch them grow,
Through sun and rain and winter snow.
I feed the people far and near —
Name my work throughout the year.

Answer: Farmer

Riddle:

I fly so high above the ground,

Through clouds where birds are rarely found.
With wings of steel I cross the sky —
Tell me now, who am I?

Answer: Pilot

The analysis of the representation of the profession concept in English folk riddles demonstrates that professional identity is primarily constructed through indirect nomination and functional semantics. Rather than explicitly naming an occupation, riddles foreground characteristic actions, tools, responsibilities, and social roles associated with a given profession. This semantic strategy creates cognitive tension between the descriptive clues and the concealed referent, stimulating analytical thinking and interpretative reasoning.

The semantic core of profession-related riddles typically includes elements such as service, productivity, responsibility, protection, instruction, and creation. Occupational identity is frequently encoded through attributive markers—such as a white coat, badge, hammer, or chalk—as well as through metaphorical expressions and logical contrasts. These mechanisms highlight the practical and socially significant dimensions of professional activity.

From a linguocultural perspective, English folk riddles reflect a pragmatic orientation toward labor and professional specialization. Professions are conceptualized mainly in terms of their functional contribution to society rather than emotional or symbolic elevation. This suggests that English folklore discourse emphasizes clearly defined social roles, productivity, and communal responsibility.

Thus, the representation of the profession concept in English folk riddles serves as a linguocultural model that encodes collective attitudes toward work, social hierarchy, and occupational value. The study of such riddles contributes to a deeper understanding of semantic modeling, cognitive mechanisms of indirect reference, and the interaction between language, culture, and social structure within folklore traditions.

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