

Abstract

Riddles can refer to all spheres of human being. The thesis is based on contemporary theories and methods of **cognitive linguistics** and **etnolinguistics**: riddles can be seen as a specific semiotic system, which contains references to the certain way of understanding the world.

The aim of this thesis is to define **the linguistic picture of human being and human body in Czech folk riddles**. The article of etnolinguist H. Kazancewa provides the methodical basis.

Riddles can be classified: riddles about **human ontogenesis** are in the first group, rhyming riddles describing human body and its parts using **neologisms** are in the second group, riddles about **organs and parts of the body** are in the third group.

Part of human body can be encoded on the basis of its **appearance**, or on the basis of its **function**, or both.

Sets of organs in the second and in the third group differ. Head, hair, eyes, nose, mouth, hands (and arms) and legs appear in both groups – they have the central position in the linguistic picture of the human body in Czech. The second group of riddles encodes forehead, stomach, knees, feet and heels in addition. The third group of riddles encodes teeth, tongue, beard, fingers and ears in addition.

Some parts of human body – back, buttocks, genitals – appear exceptionally or are missing.

Riddles about **basic human activities** – such as speaking, eating and drinking, walking and sleeping – are in the fourth group.