An Examination of Stylistic Devices in Algerian Dialect Riddles

فحص الأساليب البلاغية في الألغازباللهجة الجزائرية

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Abstract

This study examines the stylistic devices inherent in Algerian riddles (al-muḥājāt) to elucidate their structure and profound cultural significance. Based on a corpus of 102 riddles sourced from both archival documents and contemporary oral traditions, the analysis employs Galperin's (1977) classification framework, which systematically includes phonetic, lexical, and syntactic stylistic devices. The findings reveal a marked predominance of lexical devices, notably personification and paradox, underscoring the sophisticated artistic and metaphorical construction of riddles within the Algerian oral tradition. Specifically, the high frequency of personification suggests a fundamental narrative strategy where inanimate objects are granted human-like qualities and actions, a technique that deliberately fosters the essential ambiguity of the genre. For instance, common household items or elements of nature are described as speaking, eating, or walking, forcing the solver to detach the descriptor from its literal human context. The study affirms the riddle as a rich linguistic and cultural form that effectively integrates creativity, cognitive challenges, and socio-cultural transmission. By systematically classifying these expressive means, this research contributes foundational data to the underdeveloped field of Maghrebi dialect stylistics, offering new

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insights into the aesthetic mechanisms of Algerian folklore and suggesting the potential for further cross-cultural stylistic comparisons.

Keywords: Algerian riddles, cultural linguistics , Algerian folklore, Galperins' Framework, oral tradition , stylistic devices.

الملخّص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة الأساليب الأسلوبية الكامنة في الألغاز الجزائرية (المُحَاجَاة) بهدف توضيح بنيتها وإبراز دلالاتها الثقافية العميقة. وانطلاقًا من متنٍ مكوّن من 102 لغزًا تم جمعها من وثائق أرشيفية ومن التقاليد الشفوية المعاصرة، تعتمد هذه الدراسة تصنيف غالبرين (1977)، الذي يشتمل بشكل منهجي على الأساليب الأسلوبية الصوتية والمعجمية والتركيبية. تكشف النتائج عن هيمنة واضحة للأساليب المعجمية، ولا سيما التشخيص والمفارقة، وهو ما يبرز الطابع الفني الراقي والبناء المجازي المعقد للألغاز ضمن التراث الشفوي الجزائري. على وجه الخصوص، تشير النسبة العالية لورود التشخيص إلى استراتيجية سردية أساسية تُمنَح فيها الموجودات غير الحية صفات وأفعالاً إنسانية، وهي تقنية تُسهم عمدًا في تعزيز الغموض الجوهري لهذا الجنس الأدبي. فعلى سبيل المثال، تُوصَف الأدوات المنزلية الشائعة أو عناصر الطبيعة بأنها تتكلم أو تأكل أو تمشي، مما يُجبر المُتلقِّي على فصل الوصف عن سياقه الإنساني الحرفي. تؤكد الدراسة أن اللغز يشكل شكلًا لغويًا وثقافيًا غنيًا يدمج بفعالية بين الإبداع والتحدي المعرفي والنقل الاجتماعي–الثقافي. ومن خلال تصنيف هذه الوسائل التعبيرية تصنيفًا منهجيًا، تقدّم هذه الدراسة معطياتٍ تأسيسيةً لمجال أسلوبية اللهجات المغاربية الذي لا يزال في طور التبلور، كما تفتح آفاقًا جديدة لفهم الآليات الجمالية في الفولكلور الجزائري، وتقترح إمكانية إجراء مقارنات أسلوبية عابرة للثقافات في دراسات لاحقة.

الكلمات المفتاحية :الألغاز الجزائرية، اللسانيات الثقافية، الفولكلور الجزائري، إطار غالبرين، التقليد الشفوي، الأساليب الأسلوبية.

Résumé:

Cette étude examine les procédés stylistiques inhérents aux devinettes algériennes (al-muḥājāt) afin d'en éclairer la structure ainsi que la profonde portée culturelle. À partir d'un corpus de 102 devinettes, constitué de sources archivistiques et de traditions orales contemporaines, l'analyse s'appuie sur le cadre de classification proposé par Galperin (1977), qui intègre de manière systématique les procédés stylistiques phonétiques, lexicaux et syntaxiques. Les résultats révèlent une nette prédominance des procédés lexicaux, en

particulier la personnification et le paradoxe, ce qui met en évidence l'élaboration artistique sophistiquée et la construction métaphorique complexe des devinettes au sein de la tradition orale algérienne. Plus précisément, la fréquence élevée de la personnification suggère une stratégie narrative fondamentale, dans laquelle des objets inanimés se voient attribuer des qualités et des actions humaines ; il s'agit d'une technique qui nourrit volontairement l'ambiguïté constitutive du genre. Par exemple, des objets domestiques courants ou des éléments de la nature sont décrits comme parlant, mangeant ou marchant, obligeant ainsi le déchiffreur à détacher le descripteur de son contexte humain littéral. L'étude confirme que la devinette constitue une forme linguistique et culturelle riche, qui articule de manière efficace créativité, défi cognitif et transmission socio-culturelle. En procédant à une classification systématique de ces moyens expressifs, cette recherche fournit des données de base à un domaine encore peu développé, celui de la stylistique des dialectes maghrébins, et offre de nouvelles perspectives sur les mécanismes esthétiques du folklore algérien, tout en suggérant la possibilité de comparaisons stylistiques interculturelles dans de futurs travaux.

Mots-clés : Devinettes algériennes, Linguistique culturelle, Folklore algérien, Cadre de Galperin, Tradition orale, Procédés stylistiques.

- Introduction:

Riddles are one of the most ancient and dynamic genres of oral literature. Traditionally analyzed by folklorists and anthropologists for their cultural symbolism, riddles have recently garnered interest in linguistic and stylistic research. Their concise structure, metaphorical depth, and cultural embeddedness provide a rich area for linguistic exploration (Nazarova,2024), particularly in terms of stylistic devices and rhetorical techniques used. While extensive research has focused on the stylistic properties of riddles in English and certain Indo-European languages (Taylor, 1951; Pepicello & Green, 1984), there is a notable lack of scholarly attention to riddles in Arabic dialects, including Algerian Arabic. The Algerian riddle (al-muḥājāt), a form of folkloric puzzle characterized by cultural allegory, presents unique linguistic features but remains underexplored in academic literature.

The necessity of studying the Algerian riddle specifically stems from its unique position at the intersection of colloquial Arabic dialectology and deeply rooted Amazigh and Ottoman cultural influences. Unlike the riddles of Levantine or Egyptian Arabic, which often rely on Classical Arabic lexicon or purely domestic agricultural metaphors. (Al-Hajj,2020) Algerian riddles frequently feature lexical borrowing, distinct morphological features as specific plural formations, and a reliance on allegories related to the Maghrebi historical. For example, while many Arabic riddles across the region use animal or plant metaphors, Algerian riddles often employ specific punning or rhyming patterns that exploit the vocalic and consonantal inventory unique to the Algerian dialect. This particularity ensures that a stylistic framework applied to the Algerian *al-muḥājāt* will reveal patterns not observable in broader Arabic stylistics, thus making it a distinct and worthy subject of study.

This study aims to address this gap by conducting a stylistic analysis of Algerian riddles using Galperin's (1977) framework of expressive means and stylistic devices. The primary objective of this study is to classify the stylistic tools employed in these riddles and interpret their functional and aesthetic roles in Algerian cultural discourse. Consequently, this study contributes significantly to both the field of stylistics and the ethnolinguistic study of oral traditions.

1. Literature Review

The riddle, as a literary and linguistic form, has captivated the human imagination for centuries. Its enigmatic nature challenges the intellect, inviting readers and listeners to engage in a mental puzzle-solving exercise. Riddles often employ metaphorical language, wordplay, and clever misdirection to obscure their true meaning, making the process of deciphering them both frustrating and rewarding for the reader. The riddle, defined by Taylor (1951) as a "fixed-phrase verbal expression consisting of two parts——an image and an answer——often presenting a seeming contradiction," has been documented in ancient cultures from Mesopotamia and Greece to India and Palestine. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle recognized the riddle's affinity with metaphor, emphasizing its cognitive and stylistic depth.

1.1- Cross-Cultural Studies of Riddles

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Linguists have explored riddles from semantic, logical, and functional perspectives. Scholars like Dienhart (1987) and Harris (1976) analyzed the semantic fit and logic of riddle structures, focusing on how the descriptive elements create a calculated deception. In contrast, Pepicello and Green (1984) emphasized the riddle's role as a linguistic game, a highly stylized discourse form balancing the need for deep ambiguity with enough inferential clues to make the solution possible.

Cross-linguistic comparisons have provided valuable insights into the stylistic diversity of riddles. Thai Trang (2013) conducted a comparative study of English and Vietnamese riddles, demonstrating both shared and divergent stylistic devices—for example, English riddles exhibited a wider use of metaphor and rhyme. Similarly, Rahman and Badakhshan (2018) analyzed metaphorical integration in Kurdish riddles and concluded that metaphor plays a central role in constructing meaning and cultural symbolism, linking the linguistic puzzle directly to local knowledge.

Recent comparative studies further reinforce the notion that riddle stylistics are deeply tied to the source language's structure and cultural context. For instance, research comparing riddles from different African languages often reveals that the prevalence of ideophones that means authentic sensory descriptive words and specific patterns of syntactic parallelism are dominant features, crucial for mnemonic purposes and theatrical performance within highly oral traditions. These studies contrast sharply with analyses of riddles in written traditions, which may lean more heavily on abstract, complex lexical play or puns that exploit homonymy within a standardized orthography. The choice of stylistic device, therefore, is not arbitrary; it's an optimization for the given language's phonological and social function.

Furthermore, contemporary research has delved into the cognitive-linguistic mechanisms used across cultures to manage ambiguity. Studies employing frameworks like Relevance Theory examine how listeners use context, cultural knowledge, and minimal linguistic input to infer the intended meaning, effectively bridging the gap created by the stylistic misdirection. For example, analysis of riddles in various Slavic or East Asian

languages (Jabarova and Madiev, 2023) often highlights the use of specialized folk taxonomy and highly specific cultural objects like traditional tools or ceremonies that serve as the hidden answer. Such findings demonstrate that while the universal function of the riddle is intellectual challenge, the particular stylistic strategy employed is a powerful indicator of the local linguistic resources and the specific cultural knowledge being transmitted. (Jabarova and Madiev, 2023).

1-2- Rationale for Galperin's Framework

Stylistic devices, or expressive means, refer to linguistic techniques that enhance clarity, memorability, and aesthetic appeal (Galperin, 1977; Leech & Short, 2007). These include phonetic devices (alliteration and rhyme), lexical devices (metaphor and personification), and syntactical devices (repetition and antithesis). Such tools not only embellish the text but also serve crucial communicative and cognitive functions, balancing the riddle's inherent ambiguity with predictable patterns that aid inference. Galperin's (1977) classification remains a foundational model for systematic stylistic analysis in both literary and folkloric texts, and its comprehensive categorization provides the necessary structure for this study.

This specific framework is particularly suited to analyzing Algerian *al-muḥājāt* because their structure relies on a dense interplay of form and content——precisely the duality captured by Galperin's three categories. For instance, the phonetic devices category allows us to analyze the unique features of the Algerian dialect, for example: the specific realization of the emphatic consonants or pharyngeal sounds as they are deployed in rhyme and assonance——a mechanism crucial for memorability in oral tradition. Similarly, the lexical devices are essential for interpreting the cultural specificity of Algerian riddles, allowing for the precise classification of metaphors that reference local flora, history, or specific Maghrebi practices, distinguishing them from Pan-Arabic allegories. Finally, the syntactical devices are necessary to classify recurring, fixed formulae and structural repetition characteristic of oral folklore, which help organize the riddle's complex image part into a memorable and transmittable structure. By applying Galperin's taxonomy, we ensure a systematic analysis that moves beyond mere description to interpret the *functional* and *aesthetic* roles of these devices within the unique context of Algerian cultural discourse.

2- Methodology

2.1- Research Design and Corpus

This study employed a corpus-based qualitative design to investigate the stylistic devices in Algerian folk riddles (*al-muḥājāt*). The core of the research is the analysis of a carefully curated corpus of 102 riddles, utilizing Galperin's (1977) tripartite classification system (phonetic, lexical, and syntactic devices). The objective was twofold: to systematically catalog the prevalent stylistic devices and to interpret their deeper cultural and functional roles within the Algerian oral tradition.

The corpus size of 102 was determined to achieve saturation in stylistic patterning. Preliminary analysis indicated that a corpus of this magnitude was sufficient to capture the representative range of rhetorical strategies and thematic content in the regional tradition, providing statistically significant patterns while remaining manageable for detailed qualitative interpretation. The criteria for riddle selection prioritized uniqueness, demonstrable linguistic richness i.e. the presence of multiple stylistic devices), and clarity in structure. Duplicates and riddles judged as overly obscure or highly localized -which would compromise generalizability- were systematically excluded to enhance the validity and coherence of the data set.

2-2- Data collection

The primary instrument for data gathering was riddles which were sourced from two channels:

1. **Archival Material:** Prior scholarly publications were consulted, including the collection by **Mortadha (1982),** ألغاز شعبية جزائرية(Algerian Folk Riddles). This channel ensured a baseline of historically validated and widely recognized examples.

2. **Oral Contributions:** Riddles were actively collected from 12 community informants across different age groups, including the researcher's family members and relatives.

This was crucial for capturing contemporary variations and ensuring the inclusion of devices relevant to the current dialectal and cultural context.

2.3. Analytical Procedure

The analysis followed a detailed, systematic procedure:

1. **Independent Evaluation and Tagging:** Each riddle was transcribed in its original Algerian Arabic dialect and then evaluated independently. Stylistic features were tagged according to Galperin's three levels. Subcategories—such as metaphors, similes, personification, and antitheses—were subsequently noted.

2. **Frequency Analysis and Distribution:** Frequency counts were conducted for all identified devices, and the instances were tabulated to quantitatively assess the distribution and prevalence of stylistic phenomena across the entire corpus.

3. **Contextualization and Interpretation:** quantitative findings were enriched by qualitative analysis. Specific examples were contextualized and interpreted with attention to their cultural references and communicative functions.

2.4. - Translation and Stylistic Equivalence

A critical component of this study involved the translation of the corpus from Algerian Arabic into English. The primary challenge lay in ensuring **stylistic equivalence**—that the English translation effectively conveyed the rhetorical force of the original without losing the linguistic artistry.

- **Lexical Devices:** Translation of devices like metaphor and simile generally aimed for literal accuracy to maintain the original image, followed by a cultural gloss where the referent was opaque.

- **Phonetic Challenges:** Particular challenges were encountered with phonetic devices (alliteration, rhyme, and rhythm). Since a direct, word-for-word translation inevitably destroys the sound pattern:

o   The original Arabic text was retained alongside the English translation.

o   The analysis section includes a detailed discussion of the phonetic device in the original Arabic, with the English translation serving mainly to convey the semantic content. This strategy ensured that the integrity of devices crucial to the oral performance of the riddle, such as alliteration and rhyme, was preserved in the analysis, even when the English translation could not replicate them.

4- Data Analysis and Results

The comprehensive stylistic analysis of the 102 Algerian riddles yielded a total of **375 instances** of expressive linguistic devices. These were distributed across Galperin's three major categories as follows: Lexical Devices (47%), Phonetic Devices (29%), and Syntactical Devices (24%). This distribution immediately establishes that the primary mechanism for constructing the riddle's deceptive imagery lies at the lexical and semantic level.

Table 01: Stylistic Devices in Algerian Dialect Riddles

Stylistic Category	Number of Instances	Percentage
Lexical devices	175	47%
Phonetic devices	108	29%
Syntactical devices	92	24%
Total	375	100%

4.1. Lexical Devices

Lexical devices were the most frequent category, dominating the corpus with 175 instances. The high concentration of these devices underscores the riddle's function as a form of metaphorical code, where the surface meaning must be decoded to reveal the true referent

Table 02: lexical Devices in Algerian Dialect Riddles

Lexical device	Instances	Percentage
Personification	75	43%
Paradox	58	33%
Metaphor	27	15%
Simile	14	8%
Pun	1	1%

4.1.1. Cultural Interpretation of Personification and Paradox

The high prevalence of **personification** (43%) is deeply rooted in the cultural and poetic tradition of Algerian folklore. This device is used to attribute human actions, emotions, and social roles to non-human entities, particularly **domestic items and elements of nature**. This reflects a worldview where the human and natural worlds are not strictly dichotomous but are integrated and animated by spiritual or quasi-human forces, echoing elements of animistic and symbolic traditions found across oral literature.

For example, in the phrase, **"A girl smaller than me, bakes bread better than me"** (referring to a bee), the bee is elevated to a knowledgeable figure ("girl") with a specific, culturally valued skill ("bakes bread"). This personification connects the natural world to human social norms and emphasizes the cultural value of the referent (honey/bee) by framing it in anthropomorphic terms. This technique transforms insects into characters, facilitating memorability and empathy.

The frequent use of paradox (33%) serves the core function of the riddle: intellectual deception. Paradoxical statements present contradictions that are only resolved by lateral thinking and an appeal to cultural knowledge. The phrase "If you are hungry it helps you eat, if you forget it eats you" (referring to fire) combines metaphor (fire as a consuming entity) and paradox (friend vs. danger). Culturally, this highlights the dual nature of essential

forces—fire is simultaneously a vital tool for sustenance and a potent danger in the domestic setting. The riddle, therefore, functions as a mechanism for transmitting cultural wisdom about the cautious management of essential resources, rather than just a simple descriptive game.

4.2. Phonetic Devices

Phonetic devices were the second most common category, totaling 108 instances. Their primary function is not semantic deception but the creation of rhythm, musicality, and mnemonic quality, which are essential for effective oral performance and transmission.

Table 03: Phonetic Devices in Algerian Dialect Riddles

Phonetic device	Instances	Percentage
Incomplete rhyme	50	46%
Full rhyme	41	38%
Alliteration	16	15%
Onomatopoeia	1	1%

The analysis clearly reveals that Algerian riddles (*al-muḥājāt*) are not merely linguistic games but culturally significant artifacts rich in stylistic artistry. The predominance of lexical stylistic devices—especially personification and paradox—suggests a deep cultural tendency to animate and mystify the natural world. For instance, riddles portraying a bee as a "girl" or fire as a sentient "helper" underscore the symbolic and animistic thinking embedded in the Algerian oral tradition.

Phonetic elements such as rhyme and alliteration are also prominent, reaffirming the oral and performative nature of riddles. These devices facilitate memorization and enhance the auditory experience, which is key in societies with a strong oral heritage. The use of rhyme echoes what Trang (2013) identified in Vietnamese riddles, confirming the

universality of sound-based stylistic choices across languages, although Algerian riddles appear to favor incomplete rhymes more frequently.

Syntactical devices such as repetition and antithesis serve to enhance the rhetorical force, mislead respondents, or inject humor. The function of stylistic devices in this cultural setting can be categorized into three primary purposes: (1) cognitive challenge, through metaphor and paradox; (2) entertainment, through rhythm, pun, and repetition; and (3) cultural continuity, through encoded references to Algerian values, environments, and social norms. Moreover, unlike English riddles, which are often framed as direct questions, many Algerian riddles are framed as declarative statements or metaphoric narratives. This structural distinction reflects deeper cultural preferences for narrative style and cognition.

The distribution of stylistic categories found in the Algerian corpus offers valuable points of comparison with other traditions mentioned in the literature review, underscoring both universal functions and culture-specific preferences in the riddle genre

The cross-cultural comparison of stylistic devices highlights both universal and culture-specific traits in the riddle genre. The analysis of Algerian riddles revealed a clear dominance of Lexical Devices (47%), a finding that aligns with the pattern observed in Vietnamese riddles, where this category is also reported as the dominant method for creating cognitive complexity. Phonetic Devices ranked second in the Algerian corpus (29%); similarly, they hold a high prevalence in Vietnamese riddles, particularly for their use of rhyme to aid memorability in oral performance. Conversely, Syntactical Devices constituted the smallest category in both traditions, accounting for 24% in the Algerian corpus, consistent with the genre's tendency to prioritize semantic misdirection over elaborate structural complexity. This parallel distribution suggests a fundamental, cross-cultural prioritization of metaphorical coding (lexical devices) and mnemonic rhythm (phonetic devices) in the creation of effective folk riddles.

This comparison reveals a universal tendency for the genre to rely heavily on Lexical Devices (Metaphor and Personification) for its cognitive challenge, supporting the conclusions of Rahman and Badakhshan (2018) regarding the central role of metaphor in

constructing meaning. However, a key difference emerges in the phonetic realm: while both traditions use sound devices for mnemonics, the Algerian preference for Incomplete Rhyme contrasts with what Trang (2013) noted as a wider use of metaphor and a focus on different phonetic patterns in Vietnamese riddles. This suggests that while sound is universally important for oral tradition, the *type* of sound device employed is mediated by the phonological structure and poetic norms of the source language.

Syntactical devices like antithesis and repetition further serve to enhance the rhetorical force, mislead respondents, or inject humor. Moreover, unlike English riddles, which are often framed as direct questions, many Algerian riddles are framed as declarative statements or metaphoric narratives. This structural distinction reflects deeper cultural preferences for narrative style and cognition. Ultimately, the function of stylistic devices in this cultural setting can be categorized into three primary purposes: (1) cognitive challenge, through metaphor and paradox; (2) entertainment, through rhythm, pun, and repetition; and (3) cultural continuity, through encoded references to Algerian values, environments, and social

5. Limitations of the Study

While the findings provide robust insights, this study is subject to several limitations that warrant explicit discussion.

Firstly, the corpus of 102 riddles, though extensive for a qualitative stylistic analysis, may not fully capture the linguistic diversity inherent across the vast geographical and dialectal landscape of Algeria. The reliance on archival material and informants primarily from a limited geographic sphere introduces a potential regional bias. Stylistic choices, particularly the use of specific metaphors and cultural referents, are likely to vary significantly between the dialects of the coastal, Saharan, and mountainous regions such as Kabyle or Chaoui areas. Therefore, the reported stylistic frequencies reflect the corpus analyzed, but may not be statistically universal to all Algerian riddle traditions.

Secondly, the reliance on Galperin's tripartite classification—while providing systematic rigor—imposes a structural constraint on interpretation. This framework is primarily geared

towards analyzing written literary texts and may underrepresent features more central to pure oral performance, such as intonation, voice modification, and physical gestures, which cannot be captured through textual transcription alone. Additionally, the classification required translating the riddles, and despite measures to prioritize analytical fidelity, the translation process inherently risked losing the subtle nuances of certain phonetic and lexical devices rooted in the specific Algerian Arabic phonology and lexis.

6. Conclusion

This study successfully analyzed the stylistic devices inherent in Algerian folk riddles (*al-muḥājāt*) using Galperin's tripartite model (1977), confirming their status as sophisticated artistic and communicative artifacts. The analysis of the corpus demonstrated a decisive dominance of lexical features—particularly personification (43%) and paradox (33%). These findings affirm the stylistic richness of the Algerian oral tradition and highlight a deep cultural tendency to animate and mystify the local material world, thereby embedding essential cultural knowledge within the riddle's metaphorical structure. The overall distribution of devices reveals that stylistic tools in Algerian riddles serve a multi-functional role: they entertain, test intelligence (cognitive challenge), and crucially, encode cultural norms to preserve collective memory and values.

The research aligns with and enriches previous cross-linguistic findings, such as those by Thai Trang (2013) on the importance of lexical and phonetic devices and Rahman and Badakhshan (2018) on the centrality of metaphor. By providing the first systematic stylistic catalog of this genre, the study contributes original and foundational insights into a previously uncovered Maghrebi Arabic variety. Furthermore, a notable structural divergence was revealed: Algerian riddles often utilize declarative forms or metaphoric narratives rather than the interrogative structures common in Western traditions, suggesting a rich area for future comparative syntactic and pragmatic analyses of cultural cognition.

While the limited corpus size and inherent constraints of applying a textual framework to an oral genre necessitate caution regarding generalizability, the findings establish a robust baseline. This research lays a vital foundation for subsequent work with broader corpora and

suggests several promising avenues for continued inquiry: comparative stylistic studies across other Maghrebi or Semitic dialects of Arabic; detailed analysis of regional variation within Algeria to map stylistic divergence; and applied research exploring the pedagogical uses of riddles in promoting cultural literacy and language learning.

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Appendix

No.	Riddle (Arabic)	Transliteration	English Translation	Answer
1	إذا جعت تعاونك باش تاكل وإذا غفلت راهي تاكلك	idha jūʿt taʿāwnak bāsh tākul wa idha ghafalt rāhi takluk	"If you are hungry, it helps you eat; if you forget, it eats you."	Fire
2	بنت السلطان لابسة قفطان	bint al-sulṭān lābsa qafṭān	"The sultan's daughter wearing a kaftan."	Corn
3	سطيلة قد الكف تهز مية و ألف	saṭīla qadd al-kaf tahuzz miya wa alf	"A small container the size of a palm holds a thousand and one."	Pomegranate
4	حاجيتك ما جيتك، شيخ لاباس عليه، عمرو ما يجي لبحر ويأكل غير الحوت	ḥajjītak mā jītak, shīkh lābās ʿalīh, ʿamru mā yjī li-l-baḥr wa-yaʾkul ghīr al-ḥūt	"I challenge you with a riddle: a sheikh who is well-off, never comes to the sea, yet only eats fish."	The prayer rug
5	طويلة كي النخلة وقصيرة كي الفجلة	ṭawīla kī al-nakhla wa qaṣīra kī al-fajla	ṭawīla kī al-nakhla wa qaṣīra kī al-fajla	The road
6	بيضة كي الثلج ومرة كي العلقم	bīḍa kī ath-thalj wa murra kī al-ʿalqam	"White as snow and bitter as wormwood (aloe).	The salt
7	بنت أصغر مني تخبز خبزة خير مني	bint aṣghar minnī takhbiz khubza khayr minnī	"A girl/daughter smaller than me bakes better bread than me."	The bee
8	يمشي بلا رجلين و يدخل للدار بلا بيبان	yamshī blā rījlīn wī yadkhul li-d-dār blā bībān	"walks without legs and enters the house without doors."	The wind
9	حي وميت لاباس عليه، يحمل قنطار و ما يقدرش ينوض ريشة	ḥayy wa mīyt lābās ʿalīh, yiḥmil qinṭār w mā yiqdarsh ynūḍ rīsha	"Alive and dead, he's well off, he carries a quintal (100kg) but can't lift a feather."	The balance scale/ Mizane

| 10 | جبل مشقوق، نصو عسل ونصو سم | jabal mashqūq, nuṣṣu ʿasal wa nuṣṣu simm | "A split mountain, half of it is honey and half of it is poison." | Olive |
| 11 | حاجيتك على الشجرة لي ما فيها لا ظل و لا ثمرة | ḥajjītak ʿala sh-shajra lī mā fīhā lā ẓill w lā thamra | "I challenge you with a tree that has neither shade nor fruit." | The family tree |