IT IS NOT OUR intention to present a cross-cultural survey of riddle strategies; however, it is useful at this point to ask whether the framework we have proposed functions beyond the English data we have analyzed. By way of partially answering this question, we have examined approximately three hundred Spanish riddles from several riddling traditions. The results of our examination have tended to support our framework as a viable classificatory tool in several ways that we shall now discuss.

First, we found that Spanish riddles, as with the English riddles treated, employ strategies at the levels of phonology, morphology, and syntax. The highly inflectional nature of Spanish riddles results in differences at each level that merit discussion. At the phonological level, we find lexical ambiguity of the type we have discussed in riddles like 1.

1. Siempre dice algo y no sabe hablar; Puede correr pero nunca caminar ¿Qué es? El reloj. It always says something and it doesn’t know how to talk; It can run but never walk. What is it? A watch.

Here the words dice ‘says’ and correr ‘to run’ manifest the same ambiguity as regards reference to time or to human
activity as their English counterparts, and the wit of the riddle turns on this ambiguity.

A number of Spanish riddles combine lexical ambiguity with the contrast between masculine and feminine gender forms of a given word, as in 2-4.

2. ¿Qué es lo que hace el pato con la pata? *El nido.*
   What does a (male) duck make with his foot/a female duck? *A nest.*

3. ¿Qué animal anda con una pata? *Un pato.*
   What animal walks with his foot/a female duck? *A (male) duck.*

4. ¿Cuál es el animal que lleva la hembra en la barba? *El chivo.*
   What animal carries its female in his beard? *A goat* (feminine *chiva* also means "goatee").

In 2 and 3 the ambiguity is straightforward. In these cases there is insufficient context to distinguish whether *pata* means 'foot' or 'female duck,' and the ambiguity is resolved only when the answer is revealed. In 4 the strategy varies slightly, wherein the answer, *chivo,* is the masculine form of the word for 'goat.' Once the answer is revealed, it requires the riddlee to call forth the feminine counterpart *chiva,* which exhibits the ambiguity upon which the wit of the riddle turns.

Still at the phonological level, we find riddles that exploit stress and juncture in creating a block element, as in 5.

5. Oro parece, plata no es
   Quien no lo adivina
   Bien tonto es
   Ya te he lo dicho. *El plátano.*
   It seems to be gold, it is not silver/it is a banana
   Whoever doesn’t get it
   Is quite foolish
   I just told you the answer. *A banana.*

Here the crucial element is the placement of stress and juncture within a string of phonemes, yielding either /plata + noes/ 'it is not silver' or /plátano + es/ 'it is a banana.' In the flow of normal speech, this difference is easily neutralized, and the former reading is reinforced by the word
 oro, 'gold.' The solution then draws attention to the crucial phonological factors.

As with all stress and juncture-related riddles, the phonological shifts under discussion entail different syntactic analyses, as well. This same phonological/syntactic strategy is seen in 6.

6. Espera amiga porque
Espera te digo si no me
lo adivinas no te vas conmigo. Pera.
Wait my friend because
I tell you to wait; if you don’t
Guess it you aren’t going with me.
or
It is a pear, my friend, because
I tell you it is a pear; if you don’t
guess it, you aren’t going with me. A pear.

Here we find contrastive play between /espera/ 'wait' and /es + pera/ 'it is a pear,' whereby the crucial use of juncture is again submerged by the rapidity of normal speech. In addition, as also in 5, the solution is obscured by the fact that the riddlee is not attuned to discern the answer to the riddle within the riddle question itself. It is important to note that riddles like 5 and 6, as was the case with many English riddles, must be orally transmitted to be effective, since their written form becomes cumbersome.

At the morphological level, we find again several strategies that are directly related to those we have outlined for English riddles. The most closely related strategy involves the exploitation of pseudomorphemes, as in 7 and 8.

7. Agua pasa por mi casa
cate de mi corazon. Aguacate.
Water passes through my house
Watch out for my heart. Avocado.

8. ¿Cuál es la planta
que hay que decir algo
para después darle el don? Algodón.
What is the plant
to which one must say something
so that it later gives you a gift? Cotton.
One point to be made about riddles like these is that although they turn on pseudomorphemes, the overall riddle strategy is not the same as English riddles that utilize pseudomorphemes. In English riddles like “What room can no one enter? A mushroom” the pseudomorpheme appears in the question and is revealed as such in the answer. In the Spanish riddles 7 and 8, the two pseudomorphemes involved in each appear as free morphemes in what appears to be a riddle metaphor. The riddlee’s task is to discern which free morphemes in the riddle question may be combined to provide an apt referent for the description in the question.

Thus, in 7 we have a metaphorical description of an avocado. The morphemes agua, ‘water,’ and cate, ‘watch out,’ appear in the metaphorical description and are combined in the answer aguacate, although they do not function as morphemes of this word. In 8 this strategy is intensified in that the answer algodon, ‘cotton,’ is not an apparent referent in view of the riddle question. Rather, the question seems to be merely a vehicle for the presentation of the morphemes algo, ‘something,’ and don, ‘gift,’ which are then employed as pseudomorphemes. This strategy is noted by Beutler 1979 as a frequent one in certain areas of Mexico.

A second morphological strategy is seen in riddles like 9.

9. ¿Cuándo se convierte una canción en un golpe duro?  
Cuando canto se convierte en cantazo.

When is a song changed into a hard blow with a rock?  
When the word canto (song or rock) is changed into cantazo (a hard blow with a rock).

The strategy here is in fact double. First there is a play made on the word canto, which may mean either ‘song’ or ‘rock.’ The former reading is focused upon by the unambiguous use of canción, ‘song,’ in the riddle question. Secondly, the derivational suffix -azo is employed to complete the solution, in that -azo designates a blow executed with the noun stem to which it is attached, in this case cant- ‘rock,’ giving ‘blow with a rock.’ Thus lexical ambiguity provides the environment for morphological manipulation in this riddle.

We have noted above that syntactic strategies are closely related to phonological ones, especially to stress- and
juncture-related strategies, in the riddles examined. One riddle encountered plays upon phonology, morphology, and syntax to produce what Hockett 1977 calls an ‘imperfect pun’:

10. ¿En qué se parece una cama a un elefante?
   El uno es paquidermo, la otra es pa’que duerma.
   How is a bedroom like an elephant?
   One is a pachiderm (paquidermo), the other is for sleeping (pa’que duerma).

The primary phonological strategy here is contraction, whereby the sequence para que duerma, ‘for sleeping,’ becomes pa’que duerma (/para ke dwerma/ → /pake dwerma/). This renders this syntactic construction identical with paquidermo /pakidermo/, save for the second vowel and the additional /w/ in the former. This strategy closely resembles the English exploitation of minimal pairs.

At the morphological level we find that the riddle question asks for a comparison of, among other things, a feminine noun (la cama) with a masculine one (el elefante). In the answer the syntactic unit pa’que duerma, which is being contrasted with the simple noun paquidermo gives the appearance of a feminine noun, i.e., it ends in -a, as one would expect given the dichotomy set up in the riddle question. Finally, at the syntactic level, we find that the contraction of para que duerma renders this syntactic unit comparable to the simple noun paquidermo and thus produces the wit on which the riddle turns. This strategy is similar to that of the English riddle “Why is a mouse like the grass? Because the cat’ll (cattle) eat it.”

Thus we find that Spanish riddles employ a variety of linguistic strategies that closely parallel those outlined for English riddles. The same is true if we consider metaphorically-based riddles like 11–13:

11. Soy delgada y amarilla I am thin and yellow
    con pelo colorado con reddish hair
    si me dejas If you let me live much,
    mucho viva
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me derrito des-
pacito
¿Qué es? La vela.
I'll melt very slowly.

12. Verde es su naci-
miento
Amarillo es su vivir
Negro se va poniendo
Cuando se que quiere morir
Adivina lo que es.
El plátano.
What is it? A candle.
It's green at birth
It's yellow during its life
And it turns black
When it's ready to die
Guess what it is.
A banana.

13. Riye como el león
Y escarba como el peón
Adivina lo que es.
La cascada.
It roars like a lion
And digs like a peasant
Guess what is is.
A waterfall.

Although these riddles are clearly metaphorical, we also find some that, as was the case in English, exhibit elements of both grammatical and metaphorical ambiguity, but that fit neither category exactly. Consider, for example, 14:

14. Dos niñas en un balcon
Bailando al mismo son,
¿Qué son? Los ojos.
Two girls/pupils on a balcony
dancing to the same music
What are they? Eyes.

Here we find the metaphorical comparison of the coordinated movement of the human eyes to a pair of dancing girls on a balcony, i.e., in the sockets under the overhand of the brow. However, the word niñas may mean “pupil” (of the eye) as well as “girl,” so that the riddle may be taken as a more literal description, one containing a crucial lexical ambiguity. Thus both types of ambiguity are in play in 14.

Finally, we note the use of sight/spelling riddles in Span-
ish. These riddles are on the whole more elaborate than their English counterparts, as seen in 16 and 17, although some, like 15, are more closely related to the English-based strategy.

15. Estoy in medio del rio
   ni me mojo ni tengo frio
   ¿Quién soy? La letra V.

16. En el medio del mar estoy
   no soy astro ni estrella
   ni tampoco luna bella
   Adivina lo que soy
   No soy de dios ni del mundo
   ni del infierno profundo
   En medio del mar estoy.
   La letra 'a'.

17. Soy la redondez del mundo
   sin me no puede haber Dios;
   papas y cardenales, sí,
   pero pontífice no.
   La letra 'o'.

In 15 and 16 we see fairly straightforward strategies of the types discussed previously. Riddle 17 combines two strategies, playing upon shape ('roundness of the world' referring to the shape of the o in mundo), as well as the spelling of various words containing o. In all cases, however, these
riddles deal with the written code and use the conventions of this code in creating a block element.