

THE REFLECTION OF NUMBERS IN PAREMIOLOGY

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Annotation: This article examines the semantic, cognitive, and cultural dimensions of numbers in Uzbek proverbs from a paremiological perspective. It highlights how numerical components in proverbs serve not only as quantitative indicators but also as symbolic, axiological, and cognitive-cultural markers that reflect the worldview, social experience, and linguistic traditions of the Uzbek people. Drawing upon the works of key Uzbek linguists, as well as modern cognitive theories such as conceptual metaphor theory, the study advocates for a deeper, interdisciplinary analysis of numerical proverbs. The research underscores the significance of numbers as structurally conservative yet semantically dynamic units within the Uzbek paremiological system.

Keywords: uzbek proverbs, paremiology, numerical components, cognitive linguistics, symbolism, axiology, linguocultural models, semantic structures, conceptual metaphor, collective cognition.

Proverbs, as synthesized expressions of folk wisdom, represent an ancient and rich layer of humanity's cultural heritage. They serve as linguistic units that reflect the interconnection between language and thought, society and history, spirituality and values—making them the main object of study in paremiology. Particularly, proverbs with numerical components stand out as important tools for expressing systems of cognition, moral standards, and worldviews of a people. Numbers have been universal units since the earliest stages of human thought, representing concepts such as order, quantity, structure, and sequence.

Proverbs are concise and artistic reflections of a people's life experience, moral norms, and cultural worldview. In linguistics, they are not only studied as stylistic and semantic units but also as valuable sources within the contexts of cultural studies, ethnolinguistics, and cognitive sciences. Specifically, numerical proverbs summarize a community's conceptualizations of quantity, order, symbolism, and axiological perspectives. While numbers have long been key elements of human cognition, their expressive features, semantic loads, and functional roles in folklore are now being analyzed using modern linguistic-paradigmatic approaches.

Paremiology is an independent scientific field that studies short, generalized, often rhythmic expressions such as proverbs, sayings, and aphorisms. The term originates from the Greek word *paroimia*, meaning "proverb," and was initially explored in classical literary rhetoric before gaining traction in philological and linguistic circles.

Today, paremiology is an interdisciplinary field closely associated with linguistics, folklore studies, ethnolinguistics, psycholinguistics, linguoculturology, and sociology. In the study of proverbs, attention is given to their semantic models, structural components, functional-pragmatic criteria, and their place in the cultural semiosphere.

From this perspective, the numerical component in proverbs represents a key object of paremiological analysis, enabling the identification of general cognitive patterns, the

interpretation of symbols, and the examination of semantic structures. Numbers often carry not only quantitative meanings but also symbolic, evaluative, and archetypal connotations that enhance the expressiveness and generalizing power of proverbs.

As a subfield of linguistics, paremiology focuses on fixed, figurative, and rhythmically structured oral expressions. Formally established in Western European scholarship during the 19th century, it now intersects with stylistics, semantics, phraseology, semiotics, linguoculturology, and discourse analysis.

Paremiological units are distinguished by their ability to convey compact yet semantically rich information about worldview, values, social relations, and ethical norms. In this regard, proverbs are universal units and reflect national models of thinking. As linguist D. Dobrovolskaya notes, proverbs act as a "cognitive-symbolic system transmitting stable cultural content through informational codes."

G.L. Permyakov wrote that in most cases, numbers in proverbs carry generalizing and evaluative (axiological) meanings, which make them symbolic. This view supports the idea that numbers in proverbs are not just quantitative indicators but also carry deep semantic-theoretical significance. In Uzbek linguistics, paremiological research flourished in the second half of the 20th century, focusing on genre and thematic features, structural composition, artistic imagery, and rhythmic-phonetic aspects of oral folklore. Researchers such as H. Hayitboyev, T. Ne'matov, M. Mullajonov, and H. Jo'rayev contributed significantly to the field. However, numerical proverbs have seldom been the central subject of specialized studies.

Among notable works in this area is M. Mullajonov's research on the structural characteristics of Uzbek proverbs, with specific attention to the placement of numbers, rhythmic-phonetic balance, and generalizing function. H. Hayitboyev examined proverbs as functional-syntactic units, highlighting grammatical structures, thematic levels, and speech functions.

Thus, there is a growing need for a comprehensive approach to analyzing the semantic, cultural-linguistic, and statistical aspects of numerical components in Uzbek proverbs. Such research not only elucidates the relationship between language and culture but also reveals the cognitive-mathematical foundations of folk thinking.

Studying proverbs in paremiology aids in uncovering not only their semantic structures but also the national thought patterns embedded within them. Numerical components serve as integral parts of these logical-cultural models, conveying symbolic and axiological meanings. Modern paremiology treats proverbs as multi-layered phenomena, analyzing their semantic codes, discourse roles, contextual uses, symbolic structures, and linguocultural features. They are viewed not only as stylistic expressions but also as cognitive and cultural texts, requiring interdisciplinary linguistic analysis.

From this standpoint, numerical proverbs should constitute a distinct subfield of paremiological research. Historically, numbers have functioned not just as quantitative or ordinal markers but also as symbolic, cognitive, and cultural instruments. Proverbs like "Uch og'a inoq bo'lsa, to'yga yaraydi" (If three brothers are united, they can host a feast), "Qirq yil qaroqchi bo'lgan bo'lsa ham, bir kun qasosi olinadi" (Even if one was a bandit for forty years, revenge will come one day), and "O'n barmoq baravar emas" (Ten fingers are not equal) reflect the linguistic modeling of folk logic and mentality.

In Uzbek paremiology, numerical components represent ancient layers of folk cognition. They go beyond expressing quantity, embedding societal experience, aesthetic perception, ethical evaluation, and worldview into linguistic forms. These numerical elements serve as semantic centers, structural anchors, and aphoristic enhancers in proverbs. Linguist H. Hayitboyev described such structures as "conservative structural units" with inherent aesthetic and symbolic power.

Numbers in Uzbek proverbs often represent cultural values, sacred symbols, and generalized imagery. Frequent appearances of "yetmish" (seventy) and "qirq" (forty) reflect their Islamic and folkloric symbolic associations. Philologist A. Mahmudov noted that numbers in folklore are often ritual symbols, elevated to a level of symbolic sanctity in folk thought. For instance, the

phrase “Qirq kecha to‘y bo‘ldi” (The wedding lasted forty nights) does not literally express duration but conveys the grandeur of a ceremonial event.

Moreover, numerical proverbs in Uzbek linguistics often express contrast, difference, and normative assessment. Phrases like “Ikki tovuq bir tuxum” (Two hens, one egg) and “Bir boshli boydan, ikki boshli kambag‘al afzal” (Better a poor man with two heads than a rich man with one) use numbers to express social observations and anthropological evaluations. This indicates the need to study numerical semantics not only as symbolism but also as evaluative and pragmatic tools.

Research reveals that the use of numbers in proverbs reflects not just phrase-level meanings but also linguistic expressions of collective memory, social experience, and gnoseological models. Therefore, in Uzbek paremiology, numbers are active semantic units and carriers of cognitive-cultural features. Their study within modern linguistic paradigms—especially cognitive linguistics, semiotic analysis, and axiological approaches—is essential.

Today, paremiology is studied in conjunction with various linguistic subfields. Initially explored in folklore studies, it now serves as a critical resource in areas such as linguistic pragmatics, cognitive semantics, cultural semiotics, and even AI-based phraseological databases.

The key difference in modern paremiological approaches is their view of proverbs not as static phrases but as dynamic cognitive units, cultural indicators, and psycholinguistic signal systems. According to G. Lakoff and M. Johnson’s conceptual metaphor theory, proverbs regulate conceptual structures in the mind and help form stable discourses in society.

Proverbs such as “Bir kun bo‘lsa ham sulton bo‘l” (Be a sultan even if only for a day) use numbers metaphorically to express ideal aspirations, compressed psychological time, and societal appreciation of power and status. Here, “one day” is not literal but a symbolic representation of a desired experience. Similarly, “O‘n barmoq baravar emas” (Ten fingers are not equal) conveys inequality and diversity among people, forming a cognitive model for interpreting difference.

Thus, number components in Uzbek proverbs are not mere mathematical values but cognitively encoded and culturally perceived symbols. In “Yetmish yil bo‘lsa ham, bir kun qaytar” (Even if seventy years pass, one day justice returns), “seventy” does not denote duration but reflects delayed justice. This aligns with Lakoff and Johnson’s view that metaphoric structures in proverbs embody moral, social, and cultural meanings.

In conclusion, numerical components and the proverbs that contain them should be viewed in Uzbek paremiology as psycholinguistic signals, cultural indicators, and cognitive models. They simplify and symbolize complex thoughts, providing rhythm and stability to everyday discourse. This approach deepens our understanding of the semantic, functional, and cultural layers of Uzbek proverbs and opens new avenues for contemporary paremiological research.

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