

## **COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NUMBER-BASED PROVERBS AND IDIOMS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH**

**Ashirov Diorbek,**  
*3<sup>rd</sup> year Student, English language  
and literature department, Berdakh  
Karakalpak State University,  
Nukus, Uzbekistan*

**Atashova Feruza,**  
*Scientific Advisor, KSU*

**DOI:**  
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14270832>

**Abstract:** *This article is dedicated to exploring the use of numbers in proverbs and idioms in English and Uzbek, focusing on their cultural significance and symbolic meanings. By analyzing common numerical expressions, the study identifies frequently used numbers such as two, three, seven, forty, and a thousand, highlighting their roles in shaping cultural identities and values. The findings reveal both universal patterns and cultural differences, such as the prominence of the number seven in both languages and the unique significance of forty in Uzbek due to historical and spiritual traditions.*

**Key words:** *proverbs, numbers, culture, idioms, idiomatic expressions, numerical elements, historical and religious traditions.*

### **Introduction**

Proverbs and idioms are fundamental elements of language that convey cultural wisdom, values, and social norms. They are the expressions, often metaphorical, that have collective experiences and insights of a community. These linguistic forms help people communicate effectively and provide insights into the culture and history of a society. As Smith (2006) notes, numerical expressions in proverbs offer insight into societal priorities and shared wisdom, as they often capture values, humor, and philosophy embedded in language [1]. Studying proverbs and idioms can give us a deeper understanding of different cultures. This study focuses on how numbers are used in English and Uzbek proverbs and idioms. Analyzing English and Uzbek proverbs and idioms, one can notice that numbers, being frequently used, play a crucial role in conveying a message, as they mostly add special meanings and cultural significance. By exploring these expressions, we can explore the cultural values and ideas reflected in them. This comparison helps us better understand the similarities and differences between the two cultures. The primary objective of this research is to analyze and compare the use of numbers in English and Uzbek proverbs and idioms to uncover the cultural identities they express. Specifically, this study aims to identify

common numbers used in English and Uzbek proverbs and idioms, explore the cultural values and identities that these numbers represent in each linguistic community, highlight the similarities and differences in the use of numbers in proverbs and idioms between the two languages.

### **Methods**

This study utilizes a comparative and descriptive approach to analyze numerical proverbs, idioms, and expressions in English and Uzbek. The goal is to identify and compare the symbolic meanings, cultural contexts, and linguistic functions of numbers within these languages. This comparative analysis aims to reveal similarities and differences in how each culture interprets and applies numerical values symbolically. The research focuses specifically on proverbs and idioms with frequently recurring numbers, such as one, three, seven, ten, forty, hundred, thousand which hold particular cultural significance in each language. As for data collection, data were collected from a variety of primary and secondary sources. For English expressions, collections such as *The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (Speake, 2008) and *English Idioms and Proverbs* (Rundell, 2011) were utilized, alongside online websites that include the origins and explanations of English proverbs. Uzbek numerical proverbs and idioms were collected from dedicated Uzbek proverb dictionaries.

### **Results**

This section presents the key findings from the analysis of English and Uzbek proverbs and idioms containing numerical elements. Through categorizing the expressions, analyzing the frequency of numbers, and examining thematic similarities and differences, the results reveal the cultural significance and symbolism associated with specific numbers in each language. By examining common themes and patterns, we gain insights into how these languages encode cultural identities through number-based expressions. An initial analysis focused on identifying the most frequently used numbers in both English and Uzbek proverbs and idioms. While a wide range of numbers appeared in the expressions collected, certain numbers stood out for their recurrent use and cultural significance.

In both English and Uzbek, numbers such as two, three, seven, forty, and hundred, frequently appeared in idiomatic expressions. For instance, in English, "third time's a charm" and "at sixes and sevens" show the cultural significance of three and seven as symbols of completion or luck [2]. Similarly, in Uzbek, expressions like "Ming marta eshitgandan bir marta ko'rgan yaxshi" (Better to see once than hearing thousand times) reflect the symbolic meaning of thousand [6], and

“Yetti o’lchab bir kes” (Measure seven times, cut once) highlights the cultural value of the number seven.

Some numbers appeared with a unique frequency in each language, reflecting cultural preferences. The number forty was especially significant in Uzbek, likely due to its historical and religious connotations, with expressions like “Bir kun tuz ichgan joyingga qirq kun salom ber”, “Qing’ir ishning qiyig’i qirq yildan keyin ham bilinar”. There are a number of religious ceremonies and traditions related to this very number. In ancient times, items that were difficult to count, as well as religious concepts, were denoted by the number forty [9]. In English, however, the number nine appeared frequently in expressions such as “cloud nine” and “dressed to the nines” showing a unique cultural significance in this language [7].

Larger numbers, such as a hundred or a thousand, often symbolize abundance or exaggeration in both languages. In English, "Better to have one thousand enemies outside the house than one inside" is used to indicate a wide variety [3], while in Uzbek, “O’g’ri bitta, gumoni mingta”, “Yomonga aytsang siringni, mingta qilar biringni”, “Ming marta eshitgandan bir marta ko’rgan yaxshi” represents abundance of certain things [4]. This pattern highlights how both cultures use large numbers to emphasize ideas of vastness or completeness.

In addition, some proverbs in English and Uzbek share similar meanings but use different numbers. For instance, the English proverb 'Measure thrice, cut once' conveys the same idea as the Uzbek proverb 'Yetti o'lchab, bir kes,' which translates to 'Measure seven times, cut once.' Both emphasize the importance of careful planning before taking action, though the specific numbers differ between the languages. Another interesting comparison involves the use of numbers in expressions of gratitude. In Uzbek, people often say 'Ming marta rahmat,' meaning 'A thousand thanks,' to convey deep gratitude. In English, however, expressions like 'Thanks a million' or 'Thank you forty times' are more common. The phrase 'Thank you forty times' appears in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, where Tom uses it to emphasize his gratitude: “Thank you forty times, old chap, I won’t forget you.” [5]. This highlights how different cultures use distinct numerical values to express similar sentiments.

### **Discussion**

The findings from this study reveal notable insights into the cultural and linguistic significance of numbers in English and Uzbek proverbs and idioms, emphasizing their roles in shaping cultural identities and worldviews. This section interprets the results, comparing similarities and differences in the use of numerical



elements and discussing the underlying cultural, historical, and cognitive factors that influence these patterns.

The analysis confirmed that certain numbers—such as two, three, seven, forty, and a thousand—hold significant cultural weight in both English and Uzbek expressions, though their meanings and associations may differ. For example, the number seven is prominent in both languages, symbolizing perfection, completeness, or prudence. This universal reverence for seven likely stems from shared historical and religious traditions, such as its role in Islamic teachings, Christian scripture, and ancient cosmologies [8]. In Uzbek, the proverb “Yetti o'lchab, bir kes” emphasizes caution and deliberation, while in English, the idiom “at sixes and sevens” conveys confusion. Despite these differences, the symbolic importance of seven as a number connected to order and decision-making is evident in both cultures.

Interestingly, the number forty appeared uniquely prominent in Uzbek proverbs, reflecting its deep-rooted historical and spiritual connotations in Central Asian traditions and Islamic culture. Expressions like “Bir kun tuz ichgan joyingga qirq kun salom ber” emphasize loyalty and gratitude, while “Qirq yildan keyin ham bilinar” highlights the endurance of truth.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the use of numbers in English and Uzbek proverbs and idioms, showing how they reflect cultural values and identities. Numbers like two, three, seven, and a thousand frequently appear in both languages, symbolizing universal concepts such as abundance, completeness, and caution. For instance, the number seven, which signifies perfection or careful planning, is prominent in both English and Uzbek. Larger numbers like a thousand are often used to emphasize abundance or exaggerate ideas in both cultures. The research also highlighted cultural differences. The number forty is especially significant in Uzbek, linked to Islamic and Central Asian traditions, symbolizing loyalty, endurance, and truth. In contrast, the number nine in English idioms conveys joy and perfection, as seen in phrases like “cloud nine.” These differences show how languages use numbers to reflect unique cultural and historical contexts. Similar ideas are sometimes expressed with different numbers, as seen in “Measure thrice, cut once” in English and “Yetti o'lchab, bir kes” in Uzbek. This study emphasizes the role of proverbs and idioms in revealing the interplay between language, culture, and cognition. By understanding these expressions, we gain insights into the values and traditions of different societies. Future research could expand on these findings by studying other languages or exploring how modern idiomatic expressions use numbers. In summary, numerical

elements in proverbs and idioms demonstrate both shared human experiences and cultural uniqueness, offering a valuable perspective on how language preserves cultural identities.

**References:**

1. Smith, J. (2006). Cultural Aspects of Numerical Expressions in Proverbs. *Journal of Linguistic Studies*, 15(3), 234-245.
2. Speake, J. (2008). *The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs*. Oxford University Press.
3. Rundell, M. (2011). *English Idioms and Proverbs*. Cambridge University Press.
4. Mirzayev, T. Musoqulov, A. (2005). *O'zbek xalq maqollari*. Sharq
5. Twain, M. (2009). *The adventures of Tom Sawyer*. American publishing company.
6. Pardayeva, Z. (2017). English proverbs with numeral component and their Uzbek equivalents. *Евразийский научный журнал*, 124-127.
7. Mieder, W. (2004). *Proverbs: A handbook*. Greenwood publishing.
8. Hoshan, A. (2021). The place of proverbs in linguistic studies. [www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net).
9. Xolmatova, O. (2023). O'zbek xalq maqollarida miqdor konseptining kognitiv xususiyatlari. *Oriental Renaissance: Innovative, educational, natural and social sciences*, 3(7), 292-299.
10. [www.phrases.org.uk](http://www.phrases.org.uk)
11. [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)