The Symbolic Meanings of Numbers in Folk Proverbs (On the example of Uzbek and German Proverbs)

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Abstract

The article reveals the functional-semantic features of the numbers encountered in the text of folk proverbs. The numbers in the text of the proverbs are analyzed in spiritual groups. The symbolism of numbers in Uzbek and German folk proverbs is compared and conclusions are drawn.

Keywords: Traditional Numbers; Real Numbers; "Magic" Numbers; Symbolic Meaning; Number System; Primitive Worldview; Celestial Bodies

Introduction

It is well known that in the oral tradition, literature, ethnography and worldview of the peoples of the world, the number system has a special significance. For this reason, their meanings in the text of the work have been specially studied in the field of folklore and literature. In particular, this issue has been studied by such scientists as Z.Ivanova, B.Frolov, O.Davidova, N.Zhukovskaya, I.Izbekova, O.Betz, M.Leene, H.Leene, M.Jorayev [1]. In this article, we will try to analyze the situation with the numbers in the text of folk proverbs, which are a specific type of folklore, and to compare our ideas on the example of Uzbek and German proverbs.

The Main Findings and Results

Numbers are used for a specific purpose in almost all types and genres of folklore. Numbers are especially important in folk proverbs, which express great meaning through their short form. This applies not only to Uzbek, but also to other folk sayings. In German folklore, for example, there are many proverbs that use numbers. In German proverbs, as in Uzbek paremiology, numbers sometimes mean mathematical quantities, while in others they refer to ideas based on certain historical events, natural phenomena, and mythological notions of the people. For example, in Uzbek folklore, the numbers seven and three are symbolic, such as "Seven measures, one cut", "Seven years of mourning for the bereaved, Weeping until the death of the bereaved", "Three years of evil lies underground". In the proverbs 'If two

evils are combined, they will not fit into the wide world", "If Altovlon takes, he will cut off his mouth, if Tortovlon is complete, he will bring down the top", two, six, to. It can be seen that rt numbers are essentially used in the sense of mathematical quantities (from a linguistic point of view, aggregation also comes in the sense of assumptions). This situation can also be observed in German folklore. For example, "Draußen hat man hundert Augen, daheim kaum ein" [2, p. 173] ("You have a hundred eyes outside, only one at home"), "Zwei Ärzte – drei Meinungen haben" ("Two doctors - three thoughts"), the numbers one hundred, one, two, three in the sense of quantity; "Ein Junger muß sieben Jahre nacheinander narren: wenn er eine Viertelstunde davon versäumt, so muß er die Narrenjahre von vorn anfangen" [3, p. 243] ("A boy has to cheat for seven years in a row: if he misses a quarter of an hour, he has to start the stupid years again" [4]), "Aller guten Dinge sind drei" ("All good things are three") in proverbs, words denoting numbers such as seven, three, and a quarter were used symbolically.

Scholars of numbers classify them differently according to their meaning in the text. For example, A.T. Khrolenko divides the numbers used in Russian folklore into two according to their linguopoetic features: a) real numbers; b) symbolic numbers. N.L. Zhukovskaya, on the other hand, divides the traditional numbers in the epic "Warrior" into three main groups depending on their semantic features: 1) sacred numbers associated with the ancient mythological views of the ancestors of the Kalmyk people; 2) numerical symbols associated with Buddhist traditions that had a significant impact on later versions of the epic; 3) numbers used in epic poetics for the purpose of exaggeration, ie hyperbolization [5, p. 11].

Folklorist M. Juraev, in his research, cites the classification of numbers in the works of folklore by A.T.Xrolenko and N.L. Zhukovskaya according to the semantic features, noting that such a systematization does not fully reveal their artistic features [5, p. 11], and the scientist The numbers used in the study of Uzbek folklore can be divided into two groups according to their historical basis and poetic nature: traditional and "magic" or magic numbers. In this classification, M. Jorayev refers to numbers that mean "traditional" in the sense of mathematical quantities, and "magic" refers to numbers that carry a symbolic meaning.

And the second group explains why they are called "magic" numbers: "Numbers formed as quantitative indicators of primitive rituals and mythological concepts in the early stages of human thought development and enchanted as a sacred phenomenon in popular opinion are called "magic numbers" [5, p. 11]. As a result of his observations, the folklorist also notes that in almost all peoples of the world the same: 3, 4, 5, 7, 40 are used as "magic" numbers. Sh.Atayev, who conducted research on the role of symbolic means in translation, included a series of magical numbers, such as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 40, and these quantitative expressions are usually specific. writes that it is closely connected with symbolic images [6, p. 127].

According to the source we relied on, the numbers one, two, three, seven, forty, and a thousand are more common in Uzbek folklore. For example, "Two people are the god of one man", "Two hyenas tear the surface of one hyena", "If you speak evil, it is a calamity, if you do not speak, it is two calamities", "A bad word lies in the ground for three years", "Seven neighbors for a girl are parents", "A nephew enters through a door, Seven wolves enter through a hole", "A woman's trick is a burden for forty camels", "Forty horses are tied to a girl's house". Although the numbers in the text of proverbs such as "A sentence has forty meanings" seem to be used to represent numbers at first glance, in fact, the essence of these numbers reflects the evolution of the people in their understanding of the world, their mythological ideas.

Now let's look at some of the numbers in the text of the articles. One of the most common numbers in Uzbek folklore is "seven". For example, the article "Seven Neighbors for a Girl – Parents" [7, p. 126] is an example of Uzbek upbringing and tradition. We know that the people who raise and guide a child are his parents. Since the upbringing of a child, especially a girl, is a very delicate matter, not only her parents, but also others, especially her seven neighbors, have the right to bring her up, teach her what

she does not know, and correct her mistakes. That's why he has "seven neighboring parents". In our opinion, there is no serious reason to take "seven" from the numbers in the article. This number is used in the context of the proverb to mean the lexeme "plural". So why choose seven instead of three, five or ten? The reason for this can be explained by the fact that this number has become ingrained in the minds of the people as a "number that brings good". The same is true of "If you add six, it will increase, if you add seven, it will increase" (Uzbek folk proverbs, 186), "Seven measures, one cut" (Uzbek folk proverbs, 194), "Bor gives a child seven soups" (Uzbek folk proverbs, 217), "Seven days of Eid for money, one day for no money".

It should be noted that this number is recognized by the peoples of the East, especially the Uzbeks, as a number of goodness, and in some nations as a symbol of evil. According to G.D. Purbayev, the Mongols liked the numbers 8, 9, 10, and considered the seven as a sign of "evil" [5, p. 34] One of the reasons why "seven" is included in the list of "magic" numbers is that it was once the "limit" of the number, and the second is associated with the "seven pirate stars". Folklorist M. Jorayev writes about it: "The traditionalization of the number 7 is connected with the primitive views of the ancient man about celestial bodies. In particular, the understanding of the Seven Pirate Stars in the Northern Hemisphere as the seven patrons or the seven ancestors was the basis for the symbolism of the number "seven" in folklore [5, p. 11.

The symbolism associated with such figures can be found in Uzbek literature. In particular, this can be seen in the works of the great thinker Alisher Navoi. Jamshid Sunnatov, an orientalist who has studied the symbolism of numbers used in Turkish literature and folklore, observes the situation with numbers in Alisher Navoi's works and concludes: , although it refers to the numbers five, six, and seven, is broadly and consistently based on the number nine. It is no coincidence that in the works of Alisher Navoi there are such compounds as "nine ano", "nine ato", "nine aflok", "nine arch state", "nine curtains", "nine tuhfa", "nine khans", "nine glasses", "nine layers of cargo" associated with the number nine. While creating an artistic image through numbers, Navoi also draws on ancient ideas about each number [8, p. 56].

In German proverbs we often find the numbers one, two, three, four, seven, nine, ten, one hundred, one thousand. For example, in German proverbs, the number "two" is more often used to mean a comparison or a contradiction between two things of the same type. For example, in the article "Ein Haus kann nicht zwei Hunde nähren" [9, p. 202] ("Two dogs are not kept in the same house"), two mutual positions are equal in character, which is the cause of a dispute between a person or a creature, which can lead to a conflict situation. its inability to survive on earth is explained by a small fact observed in nature. Or in another article, "Ein Haus, darin zwei Frauen sind, wird nicht rein gefegt" ("A house with two wives cannot be swept clean"), two people with equal opportunities by nature have to live in the same place, mutual disagreement, the fact that the intended action is not fully realized as a result of censorship is revealed by a small vital example. It can be understood both literally and figuratively.

An alternative to this article is the paremiological unit in Uzbek folklore, "Two rams' heads do not boil in one pot". This proverb is found in the work of Mahmud Kashgari, the great linguist of the 11th century, the first collector of proverbs of the Turkic peoples, in the work "Devonu lugatit turk" [10, p. 392] ("The heads of two rams are not cooked in the same pot"). "This proverb is interpreted as saying that in a city, two beys and two chiefs cannot go out with each other, and one must go out of here". The example of the number "two" as a symbol of conflict can be seen in the examples of folklore created ten centuries ago.

The Tschagataische Sprachstudien (Textbook of the Chigatoy Language), published in 1867 by the famous Hungarian Turkologist and ethnographer Herman Vamberi, also contains examples of proverbs with numbers. One of them contains the number "two" in the real sense: "Two ships remain in the sinking", and the German translation is "Der an zwei Schiffe sich anhält, ertrikt gewiss" [11, p. 45].

The proverb gives a real-life example of how a person who tries to achieve two things at the same time is left without both. The number "two" in the text is a symbol of contradiction.

German scholars Mia Leene and Henk Leene, who have studied the origins of numbers and the truths they represent, explain the number "two" in the text of a phrase: "All units with two numbers in the center usually refer to division. Only in this case, the two are mutually exclusive, except in cases where the nature is proportional to its positive or negative side. But that harmony is often broken, especially among people. That is, one of the two must always be subordinate to the other, if the power of the two is proportional and equal" [12]. As an example of these ideas, the scientist can use an alternative to the above-mentioned articles: "Es darf nicht zwei große Masten auf einem Schiff geben" (One ship does not have two large wooden poles), "Zwei Hähne auf einem Mist vertragen sich nicht" ("One manure does not have two roosters").) cites paremiological units. And instead concludes by saying that "two is a number that casts doubt on the activity of a pair led by equal forces, and encourages it to be useful only when led by a unit".

In German folklore, the number thousand is also one of the most used numbers: It is used in the text of proverbs, mainly in the sense of expressing the plural, rather than a specific quantity: "Eigen Gewissen ist mehr denn tausend Zeugen" [13, p. 346] ("Conscience passes to more than a thousand witnesses). O. Bezt, a German scholar who has studied the meaning of numbers, argues that the "thousand" is a symbolic number of God and lovers [6, p. 128].

The symbolism of numbers can also be found in German literature. Here is a passage from Number Two. In Faust, for example, Wagner tells Faust about his dreams during the trip. In response, Faust says:

Du bist dir nur des einen Triebs bewußt;

O lerne den andern kennen!

Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust,

Die eine will sich von der andern trennen [15, p. 98];

Which means:

I have only one wish for you,

A completely different world,

I have two hearts in my chest,

The two never recognize each other [16, p. 39].

The combination of "two hearts" in these verses refers to two opposing forces in the human heart that deny each other and fight each other. Referring to the poetic function of the two numbers in Faust, K. Follmar writes: „The two serve as a symbol of contradiction and contradiction, and it requires distinction and comparison"[6, p. 127]. As you can see, in this example, too, the "two" division is a symbol of conflict.

One of the most common numbers in German proverbs is "three". For example, in the article "Aller guten Dinge sind drei", "All good things are three", the number three is loaded with the meaning of the number "good". The famous German dictionary Duden explains this proverb: "Good things always have three parts, and if something ends up really good, you have to try it three times" [17, pp. 153-154].

The German scholar Malin Poggeman interprets this proverb as "a kind of justification for the effectiveness of a third attempt at doing something". And he explains the origin of this proverb as follows: "The number three was of great importance in German and medieval law. German public and court hearings were held three times a year, and if the accused did not appear in court, he was summoned three times and a trial was held" [18].

Stepan Bapkin, a Russian researcher living and working in Germany, says that the article is used to describe the three possibilities given when a person makes a mistake or fails. And the question is, why are we allowed three times instead of two, four or infinite possibilities?

And in response to the question, noting that the origin of this proverb dates back to the Middle Ages, he writes: He had three chances. According to the rules, the defendant was invited to a meeting three times. If he did not appear in court three times, he was found guilty "in absentia" … That is, the idiom was originally used to mean "there will be three hearings in any case" [19].

Scientists also explain the origin of "magic" numbers, which can rise to the level of images, with such a unique symbolic meaning, with the improvement of the number system. For example, according to scientists such as L. Levi-Brule, E.B.Taylor, V.G.Bogoraz, F.N.Blexer, A.I.Borodin, A.B.Frolov, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 20, 40, 60 such numbers once served as the „end of the number" or „end" of the number system. As the number system improved and new methods of calculation were invented, mythical interpretations of the "old" fame of "big" numbers emerged [5, pp. 39-40].

Conclusion

To conclude, numbers, like other genres of folklore, are actively involved in folk proverbs, and they are used in two ways: real quantity and symbolic meaning. In Uzbek proverbs, for example, the numbers three, seven, four, nine, one hundred, and thousand are used more symbolically, and the numbers one and two are used more realistically. In German proverbs, the numbers one, four, six, and thirteen are used in the plural, while the numbers two, three, seven, nine, ten, one hundred, and a thousand are used in the symbolic sense.

The origins of the symbolic numbers in the proverbs can be traced back to the mythological worldviews, history, and perfection of the number system. Also, the fact that a certain number of peoples have a "positive" or "negative" color, the existence of a religious view is associated with various myths, religious worldviews, ethnographic factors that are characteristic of that nation. For this reason, the positive or negative attitudes of a nation toward a particular number may be completely different. This is evident in the text of popular proverbs.

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