

A Cognitive Study of Numerical Component Phraseological Units

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Abstract. *This article examines the mental processes behind phraseological units featuring numbers, concentrating on the role of numbers as both conceptually and culturally important parts of figurative language. Utilizing a cognitive linguistics framework, the research investigates how conceptual metaphors, image schemas, and cultural models influence the meaning and figurative significance of numerical idioms in both English and Uzbek. Through both comparative and descriptive methods, the study illustrates that numerical phraseological units are influenced by common cognitive frameworks like quantification, categorization, and scaling, while also showing specific cultural meanings related to numbers such as three, seven, nine, and forty. The results indicate that numerical idioms are not random language forms but constructions rooted in cognition that reflect shared experiences, historical customs, and cultural perspectives. By exploring the cognitive and cultural aspects of numerical phraseology, this research enhances understanding of the connection between language, thought, and culture, providing insights into how numerical ideas influence figurative meanings in various languages.*

Key words: *Cognitive linguistics; numerical phraseological units; conceptual metaphor; image schema; symbolic meaning; semantic motivation; figurative language; cross-cultural analysis; English and Uzbek; numerical cognition.*

Introduction: Phraseological units have long been recognized as one of the foremost expressive and socially wealthy layers of dialect. They typify chronicled memory, collective encounter, and socially implanted conceptualizations that cannot be caught on through exacting elucidation alone. Among the different sorts of phraseological units, those containing numerical components have pulled in expanding insightful consideration due to their double work: whereas they indicate amount on the surface, their more profound metaphorical implications frequently develop from socially grounded typical affiliations and cognitively persuaded conceptual structures. As a result, numerical figures of speech frame a unmistakable and uncovering category inside diction, where numerical markers at the same time protect, transmit, and change social information. In cognitive phonetics, dialect is seen as a reflection of human conceptualization and a instrument through which people structure their understanding of reality. Numbers, in spite of the fact that intrinsically theoretical, play a principal part in this cognitive handle. They offer assistance people categorize the world, assess wonders, and conceptualize arrange, arrangement, and scale. In any case, when numbers ended up inserted in phraseological units, they experience a noteworthy move from their exacting scientific work to obtaining allegorical, typical, or socially particular implications. Hence, numerical phraseological units offer a special window into how human cognition deciphers quantitative concepts through the focal point of allegory, similarity, and social imagery. The cognitive viewpoint emphasizes that metaphorical implications are not subjective arrangements but emerge from efficient cognitive components such as conceptual representations, metonymy, mental patterns, and epitomized involvement. Numerical idioms like “to be in seventh heaven,” “one in a million,” or the Uzbek expressions *qirq kunlik marosim* and *uch karra ko‘proq* illustrate how numbers serve as conceptual

anchors for expressing evaluation, exaggeration, emotional states, and culturally encoded interpretations of reality. The predominance of certain numbers over dialects such as one, two, three, seven, nine, and forty highlights universal cognitive designs established within the human discernment of cycles, groupings, and typical conventions. However, in spite of these all inclusive propensities, numerical expressions moreover illustrate considerable cross-linguistic variety, formed by the one of a kind social and authentic encounters of each discourse community. In later decades, cognitive etymology has given effective devices for analyzing diction by investigating the basic mental operations that allow rise to informal meaning. Scholars such as Lakoff and Johnson, Kövecses, Langacker, and Dobrovolskij have shown that idioms reflect entrenched conceptual structures and culturally shared models. Applying this system to numerical figures of speech permits for a more profound understanding of why particular numbers repeat as often as possible, why they secure typical esteem, and how these values contrast over societies. For occasion, the number seven frequently symbolizes completeness or otherworldly flawlessness in English due to Judeo-Christian conventions, though the number forty in Uzbek carries solid intentions of perseverance, move, or social custom, established in neighborhood traditions and Islamic legacy.

Main Part:

Numerical elements in idiomatic expressions exist at a captivating crossroads of language, thought, and culture. Traditionally, numbers are seen as neutral indicators of amount, but within idioms, they take on symbolic and metaphorical meanings that reflect profound cognitive functions and cultural influences. When viewed through the lens of cognitive linguistics, these phrases are not random word combinations involving numbers; they represent mental models based on how we perceive, classify, and experience our surroundings. Numbers in idiomatic phrases act as cognitive anchors, enabling speakers to express abstract ideas like intensity, value, completeness, and evaluation in vivid and culturally resonant ways.

A notable feature of numerical idioms is their reliance on conceptual metaphors and image schemas. For instance, expressions like “to give one hundred percent” or “a thousand times better” exemplify the metaphor QUANTITY IS INTENSITY, where the numerical size is related to the ideas of effort or quality. Likewise, phrases such as “the third time’s the charm” or uch karra ko‘proq in Uzbek illustrate triadic patterns grounded in culture and cognition, with the number three symbolizing wholeness, balance, or fulfillment. These examples show that numerical idioms are based in universal cognitive tendencies while also influenced by specific cultural symbolic systems.

The symbolic importance of numbers is especially clear when contrasting English and Uzbek idiomatic phrases. In English, numbers like three and seven often appear in idioms due to their historical, religious, and folkloric associations. The number three is linked with balance and harmony, featuring in phrases like “three strikes and you’re out,” while the number seven conveys notions of perfection, luck, or spiritual meaning as seen in “in seventh heaven” or “the seven wonders of the world.” Conversely, in Uzbek, numbers like forty and three are rich with cultural significance. The number forty frequently represents endurance, transition, or completion, as in qirq kunlik marosim (“forty-day ceremony”), while three, as in uchovlon (a group of three), symbolizes balance and wholeness. These observations illuminate an intriguing relationship between cognitive universals and culturally particular interpretations, showing that while the human mind consistently categorizes certain amounts, culture greatly influences their symbolic meaning in language.

Cognitive processes that underpin numerical idioms also involve semantic inspiration and mental imagery. Idioms such as “back to square one” or bir pasda (“in one moment”) illustrate spatial and temporal schemas, linking abstract ideas of progress, repetition, or immediacy to numbers. Likewise, exaggerative phrases like “a million reasons” or ming bor rahmat (“a thousand thanks”) use numerical size to express intensity or emphasis rather than literal quantities. Through these processes, numbers transform from simple figures into vessels of culturally and cognitively driven meanings, influencing how speakers convey and interpret abstract ideas in daily interactions.

Moreover, numerical expressions hold significant pragmatic and communicative roles. They improve expressiveness, heighten rhetorical effects, and express feelings, attitudes, or judgments in both oral

and written communication. In this way, they also mirror the cultural identity of the speaking group, incorporating common historical, social, and religious beliefs into the language. For those learning a new language, these expressions can be difficult because their meanings are often based on a complex mix of cultural, conceptual, and linguistic knowledge. Thus, a cognitive perspective is crucial not only for language analysis but also for effective teaching and understanding across cultures.

In summary, a cognitive study of numerical phraseological units shows that the use of numbers in idioms is intentional. They are organized by conceptual metaphors, image frameworks, and culturally rooted symbolic systems that allow speakers to convey complex and abstract ideas effectively. A comparative analysis of idioms in English and Uzbek reveals both universal trends, such as the significance of the numbers one, two, and three, and culture-specific characteristics shaped by historical, religious, and social backgrounds. These results highlight the complex relationships among cognition, culture, and language, illustrating that numerical idioms act as both cognitive instruments and cultural expressions, encapsulating shared experiences, social standards, and perspectives in figurative language.

Conclusion:

The cognitive examination of numerical phraseological units highlights the fascinating roles that numbers play as both mental and cultural tools within language. Rather than simply being neutral indicators of quantity, numbers in idiomatic phrases possess deep symbolic, metaphorical, and evaluative meanings that show the interaction between human thought and cultural context. This study reveals that numerical idioms are rooted in organized conceptual frameworks, such as conceptual metaphors, image schemas, and mental models, which enable speakers to articulate abstract concepts like intensity, value, completeness, and assessment through figurative language. The analysis of English and Uzbek phraseological units indicates that while some cognitive patterns, like the importance of the numbers one, two, and three in shaping thought, are universal, cultural traditions greatly influence the symbolic and metaphorical interpretations of numbers. In English, numbers such as three and seven frequently represent balance, harmony, and spiritual perfection, while in Uzbek, figures like forty and three embody unique cultural meanings tied to endurance, ritual importance, and wholeness. These insights emphasize the dual function of numerical idioms; they not only represent universal cognitive behaviors but also incorporate culturally specific knowledge, beliefs, and values.

Moreover, numerical idioms play significant pragmatic and communicative roles. They improve expressiveness, emphasize points, and communicate evaluative or emotional meanings in conversations. They also function as indicators of cultural identity, integrating historical, religious, and social values into figurative language. Grasping the cognitive and cultural underpinnings of these idioms is crucial not just for linguistic studies but also for education, translation, and intercultural interactions, where the figurative meaning of numbers may not be instantly clear to non-native speakers. In summary, numerical phraseological units illustrate the intricate relationships between language, thought, and culture. They demonstrate how individuals utilize cognitive processes to understand abstract concepts and how these understandings are influenced by shared cultural models and symbolic traditions. By analyzing numerical idioms from a cognitive perspective, this research sheds light on the mental functions and cultural frameworks that support figurative language, uncovering the significant ways numbers reflect human experiences, social values, and collective perspectives. Ultimately, numerical idioms exceed mere linguistic expressions; they serve as cognitive instruments and cultural relics, showcasing the richness and creativity of human language.

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