ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ISSN: 2692-5206, Impact Factor: 12,23
American Academic publishers, volume 05, issue 08,2025

Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

TYPOLOGY OF PROVERBS WITH NUMERICAL COMPONENTS IN THE FRENCH AND GERMAN LANGUAGES

Gulnoz Yarashovna Samandarova
Associate Professor, Department of Uzbek Linguistics and Journalism,
Bukhara State University,
Doctor of Philosophy in Philological Sciences (PhD)
g.y.samandarova@buxdu.uz | ORCID: 0000- 0002- 8251- 3891

Abstract: This article investigates the typology of proverbs containing numerical elements in the French and German languages. It demonstrates that numbers in such proverbs function not only as quantitative markers but also as symbolic, axiological, and cognitive- semantic units. French proverbs draw on Catholic traditions and rich metaphorical imagery, whereas German proverbs reflect moral order, social hierarchy, and practical reasoning. The study shows how numerical proverbs encode collective consciousness, cultural norms, and nation- specific patterns of thought through structured linguistic models.

Keywords: French, German, proverb typology, numerical component, cognitive model, axiological meaning, number symbolism, national mindset, paremiology

Introduction. Proverbs containing numerical elements constitute a distinct stratum within the paremiological system of both French and German. In these sayings, numerals transcend their pragmatic counting function to carry symbolic, axiological (value- laden), and cognitive meanings. Through these numerals, cultural codes, cognitive stereotypes, and linguistic norms are transmitted. This article aims to compare the typological features of numerical proverbs across French and German, unveiling how each reflects its respective national mentality and collective memory.

Numerical Proverbs in French

The French paremiological tradition is marked by historical stratification, socio- cultural foundations, and a high level of imagery. Particularly noteworthy is the layer of proverbs with numerical components. Historically, French numerals have borne not only pragmatic functions but also semantic charges tied to Catholic rites, religious symbolism, and aristocratic conceptual models. For example:

- trois symbolizes the Holy Trinity (**la Sainte-Trinité**),
- sept the seven deadly sins (**sept péchés capitaux**),
- quarante denotes periods of salvation, trial, or purification.

In modern French paremiology, numerical elements often serve evaluative, generalizing, or cautionary communicative functions. The structure of these proverbs relies upon distinct lexico- syntactic templates with traditional rhythmic patterns that enhance fixity of expression. Numerals commonly serve as:

- **Subject or object**, as in Un homme averti en vaut deux (“A warned man is worth two”);
- **Evaluative intensifier**, as in Il ne faut pas mettre la charrue avant les deux bœufs (“One must not put the cart before the two oxen”);
- **Contextual emphasis**, as in Se casser la tête en quatre (“To break one’s head into four”—i.e. to overthink something).

ORIGINAL ARTICLE
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
ISSN: 2692-5206, Impact Factor: 12,23
American Academic publishers, volume 05, issue 08,2025
Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

These proverbs exemplify cognitive models in which numbers help structure perception: abstract concepts are tied to vivid imagery, and human experience is generalized. For instance, Deux poids, deux mesures ("Two weights, two measures") reflects a cognitive model of dissonance and injustice.

In analyzing such proverbs, it is essential to employ not only grammatical–semantic tools, but also cultural and psycholinguistic approaches, since these sayings embody collective consciousness, mental templates, and historical memory. They convey French attitudes toward morality, society, and behavior via symbolic numerals rather than mere quantification.

In French paremiology, numbers function as semantic images that reflect mental concepts. They express axiological evaluation, notions of order, symbolic contrasts, and cultural meanings. Examples include:

- Trois femmes et un canard font un marché ("Three women and one duck make a marketplace")—here trois symbolizes social activity, noise, and multiplicity, creating semantic tension between un and trois (order vs. chaos).
- Il faut être deux pour danser le tango ("It takes two to tango")—deux symbolizes interaction, cooperation, and equilibrium.
- Cent moutons suivent un bélier ("A hundred sheep follow one ram")—cent represents the masses, un the leader, illustrating social hierarchy and passive majority.
- Un tiens vaut mieux que deux tu l'auras ("A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush")—un stands for the real and tangible, while deux is uncertain and hypothetical.
- Sept têtes, pas de cerveau ("Seven heads, but no brains")—sept acquires an archetypal meaning, but carries a negative evaluation.
- Quarante jours de pluie font le printemps ("Forty days of rain make spring")—quarante symbolizes cleansing, transition, and renewal, drawing from Catholic traditions and a mindset of patience and spiritual maturation.

These illustrations highlight that French numerical proverbs possess multi-layered semantic structures that reflect national values, norms, and cognitive patterns. Each number encompasses a unique cultural code that shapes the symbolic content of expression.

Numerical Proverbs in German

In the German paremiological system, proverbs with numerical components are integral and reflect historical cognition, cultural codes, and moral norms. These proverbs are closely linked with folk ethics, everyday experience, and religious values, serving as entrenched verbal stereotypes. In German, numerals also function as semantically loaded units, facilitating cognitive conceptualization. For example:

- **eins** (one): individuality, singular value;
- **zwei** (two): opposition or balance;
- **drei** (three): completeness, wholeness;
- **sieben** (seven): an archetypal number with religious and folkloric associations.

The functions of numerical components in German proverbs fall into several semantic-functional categories:

- **Generalization and evaluation**, as in Einer für alle, alle für einen ("One for all, all for one")—a symbol of solidarity.
- **Order and deliberation**, as in Zweimal misst besser ("Measure twice, cut once")—a call for prudence.
- **Symbolic time span**, as in Sieben Jahre Pech ("Seven years of bad luck")—denotes an extended period of misfortune.

ISSN: 2692-5206, Impact Factor: 12,23
American Academic publishers, volume 05, issue 08,2025
Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

- **Rhythm and stylistics**, where numerals enhance memorability and musicality.

Research in this area indicates that German numerical proverbs mirror life experience, behavioral norms, and social ordering. Numerals serve as verbal psychomodels, encoding traditional knowledge and value systems. Example proverbs:

- Einmal ist keinmal ("Once is never")—eins connotes insufficiency, instability, and a lack of habit formation.
- Fünf Finger hat die Hand ("The hand has five fingers")—fünf signifies the necessity of coordinated action and functional differentiation.
- Mit sieben Meilenstiefeln gehen ("To walk with seven-leagues boots")—sieben symbolizes speed and achievement, referencing fairy-tale imagery.
- Hundertmal gehört ist einmal gesehen ("Heard a hundred times is not the same as seen once")—hundert stands for hearsay or theory, einmal for experience and truth.

German numerical proverbs thus serve not merely as quantitative expressions, but as means of cognitive-axiological representation. They function to evaluate situations, model reality, and express human traits and social order. Comparative analysis with Uzbek proverbs reveals both universal and culture-specific patterns of thought.

Conclusion. French numerical proverbs typically convey equality, contrast, irony, psychological states, and social dichotomies through metaphorical depth and dense cultural symbolism. In German, numerals operate as markers of moral order, internal balance, social hierarchy, and functional completeness. In both linguistic traditions, proverbs with numerical components function as essential cognitive-communicative tools, encoding national mentalities, cultural norms, and collective values.

References:

1. Bozorov Z.A International scientific and practical conference "Modern psychology and pedagogy: problems and solutions" "Imperial College London" 2021-2022. 165-169 б.
2. Bozorov Z.A. Essence, structure and functions of civil culture. International engineering journal for research & development. Published in Volume 6 Special Issue , January 2021 of IEJRD E-ISSN: 2349-0721 , Peer Reviewed & Referred Journal.
3. Bozorova G. Formation of abbreviations in medical terminology in uzbek language //Центральноазиатский журнал образования и инноваций. – 2024. – Т. 3. – №. 3. – С. 86-89.
4. Samandarova G. Y. Fundamentals of folk proverbs formed on the basis of the lexical-spiritual group of insects. Current research journal of philological sciences, 2 (05), 39–42. – 2021.
5. Samandarova , G. Y. (2023). Basis of the lexical sentence group "insect" in the form of a compound sentence. International scientific conference " innovative trends in science, practice and education", 2(4), 59–67. Retrieved from http://academicsresearch.ru/index.php/iscitspe/article/view/1493
6. Bozorov Z. A. "Exceptional role of motives and needs within the formation process of civic culture in students' community." Journal of Advanced Zoology 44 (2023): 3236-3244. https://jazindia.com/index.php/jaz/article/view/1595
7. Ashurovich, Bozorov Zayniddin. "Great Oriental Intellectuals about Civil Culture." Web of Scholars: Multidimensional Research Journal 2 (2023): 21-24. https://innosci.org/wos/article/view/968

ISSN: 2692-5206, Impact Factor: 12,23

American Academic publishers, volume 05, issue 08,2025

Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

8. Samandarova G.Y., Yusupova A.Sh. Specific characteristics of paremas formed on the basis of “Insect” LMG in a simple sentences // Best journal of innovation in science, research and development. Volume 2 No 6 (Jun 2023). ISSN: 2835-3579 .(Impact factor: SJIF=9.1)
9. Samandarova G.Y. Sodda gap ko‘rinishidagi “hasharot” lug‘aviy ma’no guruhlari asosida shakllangan paremalarning o‘ziga xos xususiyatlari // Scientific reports of Bukhara state university. 2023/1 (84). –B. 161-165.
10. Meider, W. Proverbs: A Handbook. – New York: Greenwood Press, 2004. – p. 112–114.
11. Pierron, G. Dictionnaire des proverbes et dictons français. – Paris: Larousse, 2011. – p. 45–47.
12. Kunene, J. Numerical symbolism in French proverbial structures. // Journal of French Language Studies, 2015, Vol. 25(2). – p. 200–204.
13. Pierron, G. Dictionnaire des proverbes et dictons français. — Paris: Larousse, 2011. – p. 91.
14. Gréciano, G. Langue, culture et mémoire dans les proverbes français. — Lyon: PUL, 2009. – p. 117.
15. Bellay, A. Symbolique des nombres dans la tradition orale française. — Rennes: Université de Haute-Bretagne, 1998. – p. 72.