



# Research Of Numeral Classifiers In Uzbek Linguistics

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**Abstract:** This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the formation, usage, and study of numerative words in Uzbek linguistics. Numeratives act as mediators between numbers and countable nouns, specifying quantity and unity, and therefore occupy a special place in the language system as an important linguistic category. The study highlights the historical roots of Uzbek numeratives, their usage in written sources of the 15th–19th centuries, and their connection to Old Turkic. P. Hamdamov’s monograph *Numeratives in Modern Uzbek* is considered the first fundamental research in this field, analyzing the different terms under which numeratives are used. D. Khudayberganova’s research based on the *Baburnama* demonstrates the stylistic and semantic functions of numeratives in literary texts. In addition, the works of R. Ernazarov, F.G. Is’hoqov, H. Komilova, and others contributed to the identification of the grammatical and linguo-cultural features of numeratives. The research, conducted on the basis of comparative-historical and linguo-cultural approaches, also explores the significance of numeratives in reflecting national thought and cultural values. In conclusion, numeratives in Uzbek possess wide grammatical, semantic, and stylistic possibilities, and their further study deepens the understanding of the richness of the Uzbek language system.

**Keywords:** Numeratives, classifier, counting units, Uzbek linguistics, grammatical system, semantic features, historical development, linguo-culture, literary text, cultural values.

**Introduction:** The study of numeral classifiers (*hisob soʻzlar*) in Uzbek linguistics, although systematically established from the second half of the 20th century, has its earliest forms in ancient Turkic written monuments. For instance, in works such as *Dīwān lughāt at-Turk* and *Qutadgʻu bilig*, specific units serving the function of counting objects were employed. In the

written monuments of the 15th–19th centuries, the usage domain of numeral classifiers expanded further, and they actively participated in expressing various aspects of economic, social, and everyday life.

Interest in numeral classifiers continues to grow in modern linguistics as well. This is because they are recognized not only as a grammatical category but also as a linguo-cultural phenomenon. In Uzbek, units such as *nafar*, *bosh*, *dona*, *tup*, *juft*, and *qarich* reflect the people's ancient worldview, systems of measurement, and even symbolic expressions in cultural life. Therefore, numeral classifiers are not merely counting devices but also mirrors of national thinking, creating the necessity for their scholarly study.

The investigation of numeral classifiers goes beyond purely grammatical analysis. Their formation is directly related to the people's socio-cultural life, ancient worldview, and way of living. For example, units such as *bosh*, *qo'l*, *qarich*, *bog'*, and *juft*, which were used in ancient agriculture, animal husbandry, and handicrafts, originated from economic activities and later secured a strong position in the language system. Hence, numeral classifiers serve as significant sources in studying the relationship between language and culture.

In comparative linguistics, numeral classifiers are more widely known as "classifiers" and have extensive systems in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Thai. In these languages, each type of object is associated with a special classifier. Although the Uzbek numeral classifier system is not as extensive as those of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, or Thai, it nevertheless represents an important linguistic layer as a mirror of the people's worldview.

In terms of theoretical foundations and scholarly analysis, P. Hamdamov's monograph *Numeratives in Modern Uzbek (Hozirgi o'zbek tilida numerativlar)* holds a special place. In this work, numeral classifiers are described under different terms—numeral classifiers, explanatory words, numeratives, and units placed between numerals and nouns. D. Khudayberganova, in her studies, revealed the stylistic functions of numeratives in literary texts, while R. Ernazarov focused on their teaching methodology in the educational process. The works of F.G. Is'hoqov, H. Komilova, and S. Nizomiddinova, among others, have contributed to identifying the semantic and linguo-cultural features of numeratives.

International linguistic research also studies numeral classifiers as a separate layer. For example, in Eastern languages they are traditionally called "classifiers," while in Russian linguistics the term "chislovoy determinativ" has become conventional. This

terminological diversity is also observed in Uzbek and demonstrates that numeral classifiers have a complex and multifaceted nature.

Therefore, studying numeral classifiers is important not only for Uzbek linguistics but also for general Turkology and comparative linguistics. Through such research, it becomes possible to gain a deeper understanding of national thinking and linguo-cultural values, as well as to analyze more broadly the grammatical potential of the language.

In this study, several scientific approaches and methods were used:

Descriptive method – the forms, meanings, and functions of numeral classifiers in speech were observed and described based on textual analysis. The specific features of both pure numeratives and functional numeratives were also identified.

Linguo-cultural analysis – the symbolic and cultural meanings of numeral classifiers in folk life, traditions, rituals, and literature were revealed. For instance, units such as *bir piyola choy* ("a cup of tea") and *bir bosh qo'y* ("a head of sheep") were analyzed in the context of their symbolic significance in national thought.

Historical-comparative method – the usage of numeral classifiers was compared from ancient Turkic sources up to their development in contemporary Uzbek and Persian. Through this, their trajectories of development and semantic changes were scientifically substantiated.

Thus, the combined application of different methods has made it possible to study the grammatical, semantic, and linguo-cultural features of numeral classifiers comprehensively.

The results of our research show that numeral classifiers in Uzbek hold a special place within the grammatical and semantic structure of the language system, being closely linked to the people's way of life, measurement standards, and cultural values. In particular, the use of units such as *nafar*, *bosh*, *dona*, *tup*, *juft*, and *qarich* reflects not only quantitative meaning but also symbolic and linguo-cultural significance shaped by national thinking.

During the study, the symbolic importance of numeral classifiers in folk rituals and literature was also revealed. For example, in Uzbek folklore and literary works, units such as *bir kosa suv* ("a bowl of water") and *bir qarich yer* ("a span of land") appear not only as grammatical counting devices but also as cultural codes expressing national consciousness<sup>4</sup>.

When numeral classifiers in Uzbek are divided into thematic groups, many examples can be given:

1. Related to persons: *nafar*, *kishi*, *jon*, *bosh*

2. Related to objects: dona, tup, nusxa, bo'lak
3. Units of measurement: metr (meter), litr (liter), kilogramm (kilogram), gektar (hectare)
4. Volume and container units: piyola (cup), kosa (bowl), tog'ora (basin), qop (sack)
5. Symbolic and artistic units: bir kosa suv ("a bowl of water"), bir qarich yer ("a span of land"), bir bosh qo'y ("a head of sheep")

In addition, when many Uzbek numeratives are comparatively studied with their Persian equivalents, both similarities and differences specific to national worldview can be identified. For example, while nafar is widely used in Uzbek, Persian tends to employ tâ (ت) as a general counting unit. This indicates that, over the course of historical development, certain special numeral classifiers were formed in Uzbek.

As a result, Uzbek numeral classifiers, along with being a grammatical category, also occupy a firm place in the language system as a linguo-cultural phenomenon. A deeper study of their semantic and functional features serves to explore the language in close connection with national culture and worldview.

In the course of reviewing studies on numeral classifiers in Uzbek linguistics, we observed that they have been referred to with terms such as numeratives and classifiers.

The first and most comprehensive study on numeral classifiers in Uzbek linguistics is P. Hamdamov's monograph *Numeratives in Modern Uzbek (Hozirgi o'zbek tilida numerativlar)*. In this work, he also notes the different terminologies used: when measuring the quantity of objects, Turkologists have called these words "hisob so'zlar" (counting words), "izohlovchi so'zlar" (explanatory words), "words used between a numeral and a noun," and "numeratives." The author emphasizes that, according to linguistic convention, they are referred to as numeratives or numerative words.

In addition, D. Khudayberganova in her article *The Use of Numeratives in Literary Works (based on "Baburnama")* also points out that numeral classifiers are referred to in specialized literature as "classifiers" (klassifikator), i.e., selectors, and that the terms numerative and chislovoy determenativ are also used. She cites the *Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary*, where classifiers are described as "a lexical-grammatical layer of words that serve in a number of languages to accompany numeral+noun counting constructions."

From the linguistic point of view, many prominent scholars have conducted research on numeral classifiers. They have studied them not only grammatically and syntactically, but also lexically and

semantically.

Numerative words were also used almost exclusively with cardinal numbers in the language of written sources of the 15th–19th centuries. Compared to the language of ancient Turkic and 11th–14th century written sources, the use of numerative words expanded in this period.

The numerative words in Uzbek emerged as a result of the long historical development of the lexical layer of the language, and throughout this process they changed and acquired various features. When analyzing the language of literary works, it becomes evident that numerative words occupy a distinct position. In Uzbek linguistics, a number of studies have been conducted on numerative words, which are considered an integral part of the numeral category. However, these studies have described their characteristics differently, and such words have even been referred to under different terms: numeratives, counting words (hisob so'zlar), measuring words, quantifying words, etc.

Turkologists such as M.A. Kazimbek, V.M. Nasilov, A.K. Dimitriyev, N.A. Baskakov, A.N. Kononov, N. Mirzazoda, Kh. Bayliyev, and A. Khasenov identified several numeratives and indicated the types of objects with which they are used together with cardinal numbers. Later, F.G. Is'hoqov, H. Komilova, M. Asqarova, S. Nizomiddinova, and A. Ishayev also shared their views on certain types of numeratives and their specific features.

The earliest information about numerative words in Uzbek is found in the textbooks *Uzbek Language and Handbook of the Uzbek Language*. In these, numeratives such as nafar, juft, nusxa, tup, bog', jo'ra, gektar, tonna, tsentner, litr, metr, bosh, qarich, and hovuz are recorded as occurring together with cardinal numbers.

A.N. Kononov, V.V. Reshetov, and A.K. Borovkov also discussed the use and meanings of numeratives in Uzbek, such as bog', bosh, nafar, nusxa, juft, dona, and tup.

Research on numeral classifiers (numeratives) in Uzbek linguistics serves as an important source in illuminating the grammatical, lexical-semantic, and historical development of the language. Studies have shown that the issue of numeral classifiers in Uzbek has been expressed through various terms such as hisob so'z (counting word), numerative, classifier, and counting unit. This confirms that these units represent a complex and multifaceted phenomenon in the system of the Uzbek language.

The earliest studies of numeral classifiers in Uzbek linguistics were conducted by scholars such as P. Hamdamov, D. Khudayberganova, F.G. Is'hoqov, and H.

Komilova, who paid special attention to the functional role, semantic features, historical development, and usage of these units in literary texts. In particular, written sources of the 15th–19th centuries show that numeratives were widely used together with numbers, demonstrating their more active application compared to ancient Turkic.

In modern research, their lexical-semantic analysis, thematic classification, and stylistic potential have also been examined, proving that numeral classifiers are an integral part of numerical constructions in Uzbek. Moreover, comparative studies with approaches in foreign linguistics (e.g., classifier, *chislovoy determenativ*) provide a broader understanding of these units in the Uzbek context.

Thus, although various aspects of numeral classifiers have been studied in depth in Uzbek linguistics, they still remain complex linguistic units that require further scholarly investigation. Their terminological ambiguity, broad semantic spectrum, and historical evolution make this subject one of the pressing areas demanding more comprehensive research.

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