

QUANTITATIVE APPRAISAL IN RUSSIAN PROVERBS AND WEATHER-LORE

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1. Introduction

In paroemiological text structuring, the category of appraisal is of great significance. This is not surprising, as “appraisive utterance in itself expresses the communicative goal of recommendation, encouragement to action, warning, praise, or reproach. It imparts rules of conduct” (Arutyunova, 1988: 6). Such fairly evident characteristic features of an appraisive utterance are closely connected with genre peculiarities of paroemia: didacticism, endeavors to communicate the accumulated national experience and record the generalized observations on the essence of the the outside world phenomena in the most concise, easily remembered form.

Understanding of appraisal in a broad sense, that is, as qualifying an object based on comparison with a selected sample, implies introduction of quantitative appraisal together with qualitative evaluation into this semantic and pragmatic category (A. Baranov, A. Ivin, A. Shmelyov, T. Bulygina, T. Bochina, N. Med and others). It is evaluation based on quantitative variables that makes one of the bench marks of axiological analysis of situation and its components, the initial level of appraisal ranking (Baranov, 1989: 77, 80).

Segmentation of reality from the point of quantitateness presents a complicated cognitive process able to reflect mental peculiarities of quantitative appraisal, or quantification of objects / phenomena at the language level. The stock of linguistic means to express semantics of quantitative appraisal demonstrates a great variety and characterizes “natural language reflexes of the mental procedure of appraisal” (term introduced by A. Baranov) in each language separately.

The link between quantitative concepts and their reflection in linguistic thinking was already pointed out by J. Baudouin de Courtenay, when he conducted sequential analysis of content peculiarities of types of quantitateness in “linguistic thinking” (dimensional, spatial quantitateness; quantitateness of time; numeric quantitateness; quantitateness of intensity, degree) (Baudouin de Courtenay, 1963: 313).

The process of transition of quantitative features into qualitative ones implies changeover in correlation between objective and subjective, descriptive and appraisive meanings in terms of substance of the key word, the prop word in the speech act of appraisal.¹ Variation of appraisive and descriptive features while characterizing an object / phenomenon naturally leads to the situation where “axiological scales” shifts either to descriptive, “factual” informing or to appraisive view of the communicative situation.

Formal relationship between ratios of quantitative and general appraisal demonstrate certain similarities. Cf.: “big – neither small nor big – small”, “more – equal – less”, “well – indifferent – bad”, “better – same – worse” (Ivin, 1970: 25). N. Arutyunova also notes that “according to the system of values of the positive (standard) worldview, large quantity is accepted as desirable, and small as undesirable; good and many, bad and few make practically inseparable pairs in the frame of the standard model” (Arutyunova, 1988: 207). The author also classifies the above-mentioned as the positive activity of nature and man, expressing the assumption that both nature and man should seek to make large quantities – crops, yield, industrial and creative products (see (Arutyunova, 1988: 207-208)). On the possibility of transmitting quantitative meanings by the polysemant *good*, see also (Volf, 2009: 137). Cf. weather-lore in the Russian language:

В поле снег грядками – хороший урожай ржи / Snow in the field lies in ridges – there will be good crops of rye; Снег тает быстро – к хорошему урожаю / Snow melts fast – there will be good harvest; Если поздней весной в оврагах и лесах много лежит снега – к хорошему урожаю хлебов / If in late spring there is much snow lying in ravines and forests – there will be good grains; Гром на юге – урожай хороший, на западе – средний, на востоке или севере – плохой / Thunder in the south – good harvest, in the west – average, in the east or north – poor; Много иней в ноябре – знак хорошего урожая / Much hoarfrost in November is sign of good harvest; Если у вяза почек много, ячмень будет хорош / Many buds on elms, barley will be good; Когда на осине цвет сильный – будет ячмень хороший / Aspen blossoms violently – barley will be good; Если рябины много – хороши будут льны / If ashberry is numerous – flax will be good; Белье (зимой) долго не сохнет, льны не хороши будут / If linen does not dry out a long time in winter, flax will be no good; Когда осень мочлива и в мае дождь – травы будут хороши / When autumn is rainy and showers in May – grass will be good; Снег сверху тает от солнца – хлеб будет плох / Snow melts on top – grains will be no good; etc.

The linguistic category of quantitateness is divided into subcategories of discrete and nondiscrete quantity, indicated already by Aristotle in his famous work *Metaphysics* as “countable” and “measurable” (Aristotle, 1975: 164). The parameter of discreteness / nondiscreteness is connected with the fact that quantitative appraisal can be applied both to discrete sets by the number of components of a quantified set and nondiscrete objects from the point of possibility of measurement (weight, volume, etc.) (Shmelyov, 2005: 512-513).

¹ On correlation between appraisive and descriptive meanings, see in detail (Hare, 1985).

Characterizing the paroemiological system of the Russian language from the point of quantitative appraisal, it is essential to note the heterogeneous character of quantitative categorization of denotative domain of proverbs (adverbial, adjectival, adverbial- and adjectival-nominal, numerative and numerative-nominal, as well as verb forms).

Taking into account the existing research on quantitative appraisal ((Bochina, 2003a), (Bochina, 2003b), (Kul'kova, 2011a), (Kul'kova, 2011b), and others), in the present work we will attempt to focus our investigatory attention on juxtaposition of ways of reflecting the semantics of quantitative appraisal in proverbs and weather-lore of the Russian language with the consecutive exposure of nation-specific features of perception of quantitative continuum and language peculiarities of its reflection in the paroemiological system of the Russian language.

2. Discrete Quantified Sets

The analysis of discrete indicators of qualitative appraisal in proverbs of the Russian language showed high term frequency for numerals *one, two, three, seven, ten, forty*, and some others in combination both with concrete nouns naming forms of the animal world, inanimate objects, and with abstract notions:

Одна головня и в печи не гаснет, а две и в поле кудрятся / One firebrand would not go out even in the furnace, and two smoke even in the field; Три года – не три века / Three years are not three centuries; Семь топоров вместе лежат, а две прялки врозь / Seven axes lie together, but two spinning-wheels apart; Лучшие семь топоров, чем семь копылов / Better seven axes than seven poppets; Один хороший лекарь вылечит скорее, чем сорок плохих / One good doctor will cure you sooner than forty bad ones; Не имей сто рублей, а имей сто друзей / Rather have a hundred friends than a hundred rubles.

Spatial and time continuums also receive discrete quantitative appraisal in proverbs:

К милой семь верст не околица / Seven versts are no long way if you head for your sweetheart; Дураку семь верст не крюк / Seven versts are no detour for a fool; Где мило, семь верст не криво / If for pleasure, seven versts are no roundabout; Обещанного три года ждём / He who expects from a promise a lot must wait for three years or maybe not.

High term frequency of numerals divisible by ten (*ten, hundred, thousand*) is noted in Russian proverbs and sayings:

Ты ему слово, а он тебе десять / You say to him on word, he will say back ten; Кто украл, на том один грех; у кого украли, на том десять / The robber has got one sin, the robbed ten; Со ста дворов стадо коров / A herd of cattle from a hundred households; Сто голов – сто умов / A hundred heads – a hundred minds; На одного виноватого по ста судей / A hundred judges for one accused; Не купи на сто, купи на ста (something necessary) / Don't buy for a hundred, buy for the need; Служи сто лет, а не выслужишь ни ста пен / Serve one hundred years, but you will not get even a hundred turnips; Господь одним хлебом тысячи напичкал / The Lord fed thousands with one bread; Не считанной тысячи в итоге нет / A thousand not counted is never gained; Один воин тысячи водит (а Бог и воеводу и тысячи водит) / One warrior leads thousands (and God leads both the warrior and the thousands); and others.

Russian weather-lore texts register the use of numerals of a wider numeric range (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 40), for example:

Красноватый круг около луны, скоро пропадающий, – к вёдру; два круга или один тусклый – к морозу / A reddish nimbus around the moon that soon fades – fair weather is coming, two nimbuses or a vague one – frost is coming; За три дня до рождения луны или после рождения ее всегда бывает перемена погоды / Three days before or after the young moon, there always is change of weather; Лен две недели цветет, четыре недели спит, а на седьмую семя плавает / Flax blossoms two weeks, ripens four weeks, and during the seventh week the seed is floating; Если на Ивана дождь заплачет, то через пять дней солнышко будет смеяться / If rain weeps on St. John, in five days the sun will laugh; У зайца жесткая шерсть – зима месяцев шесть / Hares are wire-haired – winter will last about six months; Цветы белой кувшинки при устойчивой погоде словно по волшебству ровно в семь часов утра открываются и ровно в восемь часов вечера закрываются / White water lily flowers in settled weather are out at seven a.m. and shut at eight p.m., as if by magic; После Егорья бывает еще двенадцать морозов / After St. George, twelve more frosts will come.

It ought to be noted that in weather-lore containing numerals, prevalent are *three, seven, and forty*:

Если месяц в три дня обглядится, то весь будет вёдрый, а когда три дня дождя, то весь ненастный / If the month looks around in three days, the whole of it will be fair weather, and when it is three days of rain, the whole of it will be nasty; Спустя три недели после отлета журавлей непременно ударят первые ночные заморозки / Three weeks after the cranes fly-away, the first night frosts are sure to come; Покажутся «слезы» у основания черешков клена – через три дня ожидай дождя / “Tears” appear at maple leaf base – in three days rains will come; Если грачи сели на гнезда, через три недели надо выходить на посев / If

*rooks settle in their nests, in **three** weeks it is time to go out for sowing; **Семь** отроков **семь** дождей несут / **Seven** lads bring **seven** rains; На Самсона дождь – **семь** недель дождь / Rain on Samson – **seven** more weeks of rain; Если осенью снег **семь** раз падал и **семь** раз сходил и лишь на восьмой окончательно лег – летом хлеб будет очень хорош / If snow in autumn falls **seven** times and melts down **seven** times and only on the eighth day finally lay down – grains will be good in summer; Первый снег выпадает **сорок** дней до зимы / Early snow falls **forty** days before winter; На **сорок** мучеников **сорок** птиц прилетает. / On the day of the holy **forty** martyrs, **forty** birds fly in; **Сорок** пичуг на Русь пробирается / **Forty** little birds crawl to Rus.*

As demonstrated by the analysis of the language material, in most cases discrete quantitative appraisal is given to temporal characteristics of celestial bodies, natural phenomena, as well as the intensity of those natural phenomena (for example, *forty frosts; forty days of rain*):

*Гречу сеять пропустя **сорок морозов** после сорока мучеников / Sow buckwheat after the **forty frosts** following the day of the holy forty martyrs; С Благовещенья осталось **сорок морозов** / **Forty frosts** are left to follow the Annunciation day; Если на Мефодия дождь, то он с перерывами будет идти **сорок дней** / If it is rain on Methodius day, it will intermittently rain **forty days** (invariant: На Мефодия дождь – **на сорок дней** / If it is rain on Methodius day, it will continue **forty days**).*

The singularity of numerals usage in the compared paroemiological genres is to a large extent determined by the difference in the main linguo-cognitive principles for proverbs and weather-lore. While the latter bases itself upon the relation of analogy between two facts, two phenomena, the universal principle of the proverbs and sayings genre is contrast, or opposition.

A considerable number of researchers of proverbial domain acknowledge that opposition is one of the main features of a proverb. For example, G. Milner considers that a proverb is long since of a four-part pattern where four smallest segments are grouped by two, and those two halves are opposed to each other (Milner, 1969). Binariness of a proverb at rhythmic-phonological, syntactic-grammatical, and semantic levels established in the article by Greimas (Greimas, 1970). Matti Kuusi, on the basis of structural analysis, comes to the conclusion that in international classification of proverbs with the greatest sequence, the system of binary oppositions can be applied, and each proverb may be interpreted as a choice between two alternatives (Kuusi, 1978: 56). According to the expert opinion of G. Permyakov, “the true **theme** of a certain proverb or saying is not a specific word, idea, or even area of human activity, but some **invariant pair of contrasted entities** to which the meaning of the images used in a certain proverb comes down” (Permyakov, 1988: 107).

The semantic invariant ‘many – few’ expressed by numerals shows three major variants in proverbs: *many – few, many – one, two – one*. The choice of numerals is both accidental and determined. On the one hand, the contrast of numbers is based upon elementary arithmetic views on their quantitative correlation (more – fewer), on which ground judgements are made about the relative quantitative appraisal. Together with that (and because of that), the semantic function ‘many’ can be expressed by numerals ranging among relatively small values, and one and the same number in different oppositions can represent opposing meanings of numerousness / fewness:

***Три** дня молот, а в полтора съел / Ground in **three** days, eaten up in one and a half; Торгу на **три** алтына, а долгу на пять / A **three-ruble** deal and a five-ruble debt.*

On the other hand, each of the opposition components can be substituted with another numeral (provided their comparative correlation is observed) without sacrificing the general meaning².

This kind of relativity is fully conforms with the folklore world model where, for instance, numeric characteristics of time and space “practically do not have absolute meanings, neither do they correspond to actual mathematical values, but they are relative in their essence and get their meaning only depending on the choice of reference point” (Tsivyan, 1990: 10). Such point of reference, the minimum limit of the semantic function ‘few’ for whole numbers is *one*. The representation of indefinitely large quantity shows lexical variety:

*Горя **много**, а смерть одна / Sorrows are **many**, but death is **one**; Один волк гоняет овец **полк** / One wolf drives a **fold** of sheep; Беглому **одна** дорога, а погонщикам **сто** / **One** way for a runaway, but a **hundred** for packers; Село Воронье днем **семидесяти** господ, а ночью **одного** / The village of Ravens belongs to **seventy** masters during the day and to **one** at night; И **один** глаз, да зорок, не надо и **сорок** / Even **one** eye, but sharp, no need to have **forty**; **Один** умен **десять** безумных водит / **One** smart fellow leads **ten** stupid ones.*

It is absolutely obvious that *a hundred ways, seventy masters of one village, and forty eyes* are hyperbolic exaggerations, and that in all above-mentioned proverbs, the exact quantitative definiteness of appraisal is fictional, its concreteness is of formal character. There is no doubt that here the numerals convey not the counting result, but just subjective interpretation of objective parameters. In this way, numerals play the role of concrete-vivid representation of the relative quantitative appraisal. Hence synonymy of numerals and the indefinite pronoun *many*:

² On correlation between *many-few* see also *Sprichwort* (Röhrich, Mieder, 1977: 62).

*Много сватается, да одному достанется – Сватались к девушке **тридцать с одним**, а быть ей за одним / **Many** propose to her, but she will be given only to one – **Thirty and one** have asked the girl in marriage, but she will marry only one,*

and also interchangeability and equivalence of numerals in proverbs:

*Десять раз примерь, один раз отрежь! / Measure thy cloth **ten** times and cut once – Семь раз примерь, один раз отрежь! / You must measure **seven** times before you start cutting – Пять раз отмеряй, да один отрежь / Measure **thrice** and cut once; Семь капралов над одним рядовым / **Seven** Corporals over one private – На одного исполнителя **три** повелителя / **Three** chiefs for one doer; Семеро одного не ждут / **Seven** don't wait for one – Двое одного не ждут / **Two** don't wait for one.*

Thus, quantitative quantifiers in proverbs bear relative character. The conventionality of meanings for quantification indicators in proverbs is achieved due to metonymic shifts, besides, the discrete meaning of quantity can be transformed into nondiscrete, as a rule, conveying the meaning of indefinite large quantity. For example:

*семь верст / seven versts (= far): Семь верст до небес и все лесом / **Seven versts** to the sky, and all through wood (Zhukov); семь недугов / seven ailments (= lots of diseases): Чеснок **семь недугов** изводит / Garlic keeps away **seven ailments**; семь бед / seven misfortunes (= much trouble): Всякая беда **семь бед** рождает / Any misfortune breeds **seven more**; семь дел / seven deeds (= a lot of responsibility): Семь дел в одни руки не берут / Don't take **seven deeds** in one pair of hands; семь пастухов / seven shepherds (= many supervisors): У одной овечки да **семь пастухов** / One sheep has **seven shepherds**.*

Quantifiers *three, ten, hundred, thousand* in proverbs can convey the meaning of intensity in order to build up additional expressiveness, participating in the formation of fixed collocations (*with three quills, with three axes, with three cudgels, one hundred years, a hundred judges, a thousand times*):

*Пишет в три пера (рубит в три топора), а денежка не спора / Write **with three quills** (cut **with three axes**), but get little money; Нашего Мины не проймешь в три дубины / Our Mina would not be gotten to even **with three cudgels**; Служи сто лет, а не выслужишь ни ста реп / Serve **one hundred years**, but you will not get even a hundred turnips; На одного виноватого **по студице** / A **hundred judges** for one accused; Трус умирает **тысячу раз**, <а храбрый один раз> / A coward dies **a thousand times** <and a brave fellow one time>; etc.*

The list of numerals of emotionally indefinite large quantity varies in different languages depending on which of them are “central” in a certain culture.

In Russian proverbs, the most widespread numeric opposition is *seven – one*, whose semantics is defined not by the factual numeric values, but by their interrelationship with quantitative appraisal ‘*many – few*’:

*Рубить семерым, а топор один / Felling for **seven**, but there is only **one** axe; Один с сошкой (that is, the worker), а семеро с ложкой / **One** with a plough, **seven** with a spoon; Один рубит, семеро в кулаки трубят / **One** does the felling, **seven** trumpet with their palms; Нужда (беда, горе) семерых задавила, а радость одному досталась / The need (misfortune, calamity) pressed for **seven**, but joy visited only **one**; Делай дело за семерых, а слушайся одного / Do the work of **seven**, but obey only **one**; and others.*

As for the choice of numerals in proverbs, the frequency of the numeric constant *seven* as an indicator of plurality is perhaps connected with its common cultural significance, its special “magic” role in archaic traditions, the way this number is linked to the concept of the universe (Mify, 1991: 2, 630).

Linguists time after time noticed a strong preference on the part of language thinking for the numeral *two*, which is reflected in the existence of the special grammatical form of the dual number. In the proverbial domain, cognitive and cultural significance of the numeral *two* and its prominence on the background of all others manifests in the independent position of the invariant topical pair *two – one* in proverbs, only in part overlapping the invariant *many – few*. The general issue embraced by the opposition ‘*many – few*’, is the comparison of two entities (in the meaning of ‘many’) with only one entity, that is, a purely quantitative contrast:

Аришн на кафтан, да два на заплаты / Arshin for a kaftan and two for patches; Убогого одна нужда гнетет, скупого две (wretchedness and meanness) / The needy suffers from one need, the stingy from two; Ласково телятко две матки сосет, а лхое и одну запустит / A friendly calf sucks two mothers, and a boisterous one will lose even one.

Yet, the opposition *two – one* is more often oriented at qualitative and quantitative appraisal connected with the archetype of the corresponding numbers. It is commonly known that in archaic cultures, including Russian, *one* meant sustainability, unity, and the number *two* laid the basis for binary contrapositions and served as a sign of contrast and

separation (Mify, 1991: 2, 630). The irreconcilable conflict between complete wholeness and clash of two opposing elements is reflected in proverbs on different topics:

Одному началу не два конца / One beginning will not have two ends; В один день по две радости не живет / There cannot be two joys for one day,

especially about the harm of dual power:

Двум головам на одних плечах тесно / No room for two heads on one neck; Два медведя в одной берлоге не уживутся / Two bears would not get on in one and the same lair; Две бараньи головы в один котел не лезут / Two ram's heads would not fit into one cauldron,

and also about quarrelsome disposition of two strange women in one family (daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, daughter-in-law and sister-in-law):

Две собаки в одной конуре не уживутся / Two dogs would not get on in one and the same kennel; Две собаки из одной миски лакать не станут / Two dogs will not lap up from the same bowl; Двух гусынь в одно гнездо не усадишь / You would not place two geese onto one nest.

On the other hand, *two* signified complementarity, homology of the opposed members, referred to the idea of twoness (op. cit.). Hence the preference of two to one:

Ум хорошо, а два лучше того / Two heads are better than one;

together with that, transformation of a quantitative advantage into a qualitative one is recognized:

Две маленькие собаки большую едят / Two small dogs eat up a big one,

which grow at an exponential rate (and not arithmetic progression):

Два одному рать / Two are an army for one; Един гонит сто, а два тьму / One puts to flight a hundred, and two, ten thousand.

That is why human weakness was determined by loneliness and asociality, and strength by twoness and sociality (two is as good as a group):

Один Фома горюет, а два в поле воюют / One Thomas grieves at home, and two fight in the field; Двое в поле воюют, а один у дома горюет / Two fight in the field, and one grieves even at home.

The idea of twoness and complementary components of the male – female monad with number *two* served a figurative foundation of proverbs about loneliness and marriage:

Две головни и в поле дымятся (курятся), а одна и в печи гаснет / Two firebrands smoke (reek) even in the field, and one goes out even in the furnace.

In such cases quantitative contrast fades to less significance and the opposition ‘single – family’ comes to the fore: compare the proverb *Семья воюет, а одинокий горюет / A family fights, and a lonelyheart grieves*, and also the specific semantization of numerals in the proverb about a spouses quarrel: *Семерым просторно, а двоим тесно / Spacious for seven, tight for two*, where the numeral *two* points to a married couple, and *seven* to a large family with children.

In the domain of quantitative appraisal, the mentioned opposite pairs are joined by the topical pair *one – all* and semantically equivalent oppositions representing the invariant ‘part – whole’:

Один за всех, все за одного / One for all, all for one (invariant: Стоять всем за одного и одному за всех / Stand all for one and one for all); Одна паршивая овца все стадо портит / One scabby sheep will mar a whole flock; Ложка дегтя портит бочку меда / One rotten apple spoils the whole barrel.

Thus, contrast as a universal principle for proverbs and sayings manifests in the opposition character of quantitative appraisal, including contraposition of numerals. Weather-lore, on the contrary, is characterized by parallelism of the observed and expected, manifesting in the same quantification of two or several events / phenomena / objects, often supported lexically in the conditional and consecutive clauses:

На сорок мучеников сорок птиц прилетает / On the day of the holy forty martyrs, forty birds fly in; Первый Спас – первый сев / First Savior Feast Day – first sowing; Ласточки отлетают в три раза, в

три Снаца / Swallows fly away in **three** series, on **three** Savior Feast Days; С **сорока** мучеников – **сорок** утренников / From the day of the holy **forty** martyrs – **forty** morning frosts; **Семь** отроков **семь** дождей несут / **Seven** lads bring **seven** rains; Какова погода на **Сороки** (день **сорока** мучеников) – такова она будет еще **сорок** дней: если мороз – **сорок** морозов, если дождь – ждут **сорока** дождей / What the weather is on the **Forty** (the day of the holy **forty** martyrs) – the same it will remain **forty** more days: if frost – **forty** frosts, if rain – **forty** rains.

The definite arithmetic value of a numeral in weather-lore is contrasted to symbolic and expressive-appraisive meaning of numerals in proverbs, cf.:

Два круга вокруг луны – к морозам / **Two** moon nimbuses – for the coming frost; Дождь с севера – на **три** дня / Rain from the north – for **three** days; От первого снега до санного пути – **шесть** недель / From early snow to sleighing – **six** weeks; Если грач прилетел до **четырнадцатого** марта – быть лету мокрому, а снег рано сойдет / If rooks flew in before the **fourteenth** of March – the summer will be wet, and the snow will melt down early; Сладок мед, да не по **две** ложки в рот / Sweet as it is, you will get **two** spoonfuls of honey at once; Нашего Мины не проймешь и в **три** дубины / Our Mina would not be gotten to even with **three** cudgels; **Семь** сел, **один** вол, а **десять** урядников / **Seven** villages, **one** ox, and **ten** village constable; and others.

3. Nondiscrete Quantified Sets

Nondiscrete appraisal is often reflected in Russian proverbs, as a rule, in opposing pairs expressing quantitative-qualitative and quantitative proper evaluations.

Quantitative and qualitative relationships in the functional semantic field of quantitative appraisal characterize, as a rule, the value of the quantified object from the point of size, length, weight, density, cost, quantitative and qualitative condition of the crops, as well as duration and intensity of the phenomenon (*high, long, big, rich, weighty*, etc.)³. For example:

Если бобы **высокие**, то и лен **высокий** будет / If beans stand **high**, Flax will be **high** also; Зимой **высокие** дороги – **высокие** будут хлеба / Roads are **high** for snow in winter – grains will stand **high**; **Длинные** капельники (сосульки) – **долгие** льны / **Long** icicles – **long** flax; Снег **плотный**, мокроватый – к мокрому, сухой и **легкий** – к сухому лету / If snow is **packed** and moist – summer will be wet, if snow is dry and **light** – summer will be dry; Если корова во время сна держит во рту соломинку или клоч сена – покос будет плохой и сено **дорого** / If a cow during sleep holds a straw or hay – mowing will be poor and hay **expensive**; Если мыши нагрызут хлеб (печеный) сверху, **дорог** будет, снизу – **дешев**, а сбоку – **средняя цена** / If mice gnaw bread on top, it will be **expensive**, on the bottom – **cheap**, on the side – **average price**; Вьюга в Васильев вечер обещает **большой** урожаем орехов / Blizzard on Vasily night forecasts **high** yield of nuts; **Большой** иней – к хлебородью / Much hoarfrost – for grainery year; Сильные грозы с градом предвещают **обильный** урожаем грибов / Heavy thunderstorms and hail forecast high yield of pepper-mushrooms; **Долгий** гром – к ненастью, **отрывистый** – к просветлению / **Long** thunder – for storm, **quick** thunder – for clearing; Весной снеготаяние шло с туманами – хлеба вырастут **неполновесными** / If melting season was foggy – grains will grow **underweight**.

Imagery makes an important feature of the genre of proverbs and sayings, which is also manifested with quantitative axiologization of the world. Paramiographers more than once noted that of great importance in the language of proverbs and sayings is specific vocabulary: it serves as the main “construction material” (Permyakov, 1970: 19) for proverbs and determines the artistic merit and aesthetic value and national originality of both proverb stock on the whole and its single samples. Undoubtedly, a significant part of quantitative oppositions in proverbs consists of various metrological terms, both indefinite, approximate “folk measure units” and exact, official measure units, validated by the state or tradition, including:

linear measures: Нос с локоть, а ума с перст / Nose as long as cubit, but sense is as short as finger; **volume measures:** Худое охапками, хорошее щепотью / Evil by sheaves, good by a pinch; **measures of weight:** Здоровье выходит пудами, а входит золотниками / Health squandered in pounds, builds up in zolotniks; **measures of value:** На грош амуниции, а на рубль амбиции / Equipment for a kopeck, ambition for a rouble; **time units:** Год кормила, а век кормилицей слывет / Nursed for a year, reputed as a nurse for a lifetime.

Relative quantitative appraisal expressed by oppositions of measurement units, is characterized by semantic diffuzziness, its dependence on absolute quantitative meaning of measurement substantives is optional: one and the same term as part of different oppositions can express semantic functions of both ‘large’ and ‘small’. Diffuzziness of the relative quantitative appraisal, concretized only in opposition, manifests more strikingly with components of the

³ Cf. The analysis of quantitative appraisal in English and Russian phraseological units conducted by Arsenteva E.F. (Arsenteva, 1989: 80-84).

middle part of the gradual sequence. Thus, the time terms *day*, *week*, *year* are capable of pointing both at a long and short span of time, which depends on the meaning of the cohyponyms compared to them:

day ‘small’: *День долог, а век короток / Day is long, life is short – day* ‘large’: *Ковки час, а ладки день / An hour to forge, a day to fix; week* ‘small’: *Терни горе неделю, а царствуй год / Suffer a week, reign a year – week* ‘large’: *День пируют, а неделю голова с похмелья болит / After a day’s feast, headache for a week; year* ‘small’: *Посуленного год ждут, а суженого до веку / Wait for a year what you were promised, wait for the betrothed for a lifetime – year* ‘large’: *Бил жену денечек, сам плакал годочек / He beat his wife a day, grieved a year.*

Besides, contrast can be effected by contrapositioning of any members of the gradual scale, including consecutive ones, whose absolute quantitative differences are minimal:

Не было ни гроша, да вдруг алтын / No penny left, but suddenly hit a jackpot; Не стоит гроша Пахом, а смотрит нятаком / Pakhom is no worth a kopeck, but looks as if he is a fiver.

Apart from that, the stylistic effect and the typical relation ‘large – small’ denoted by the proverb do not depend on the distance between the cohyponyms in the lexical paradigm, which is exposed by the significantive synonymy of oppositions in invariant proverbs:

Плотнику (работнику) копейку, подрядчику (нарядчику) рубль / A kopeck to the carpenter (worker), a ruble to the master; Работнику алтын, а нарядчику рубль / An altyn to the worker, a ruble to the master; Работникам дают алтыны, а их нарядчикам полтины / Three kopecks to the workers, fifty to the masters; Швецу гривна, закройщику рубль / Grivna to the sewer, ruble to the tailor; Делальщику полтина, а нарядчику рубль / Fifty kopecks to the doer, a ruble to the master.

Thus, contextual polarity of measurement units justifying the significantive contrast of ‘large – small’, is based on the ratio of ‘more – fewer’ common to the members of the gradual scale in paradigmatics, which agrees with common philosophical and language congruence of categories of quantity and comparison.

Dimensions objectively inherent to all objects of reality, are in some way represented in the lexical meaning of many words naming objects of significance for a certain ethnic culture. In proverbs, the contrast of large and small is often effected by oppositions of names of

water basins: *Ругает реку, а хвалит лужу / He scorns a river, but boasts of a pool; insects, birds, wild and domestic animals:* *Не сули журавля в год, а хоть синицу, да в рот / Don’t promise a crane a year, even a titmouse is good enough for the mouth; settlements:* *Голоден переходит грады, а наг ни двора / The hungry would cross cities, the naked would not cross even a yard; structures:* *Женина родня ходит в ворота, мужнина в прикалиток / In-laws go through the gates, the man through the wicket; apertures:* *С молодца прорешка, а под старость дыра / A slash in youth, a hole in old age; movable property and real estate:* *Дает стогом, а принимает логом / He gives out by stacks and takes back by logs; instruments of violence and punishment:* *Не бей в чужие ворота плетью, не ударили бы в твои дубиною / Don’t beat your neighbors’ gates with a whip, lest they smash yours with a cudgel; wood and woodwork:* *В лесу – дуб рубль: в столице – по рублю спица / In the forest, an oak is worth a ruble, in the city, a spike is worth a ruble; abnormal, morbid neoformations on the body:* *Своя болячка больше чужой язвы / Your own sore is bigger than a neighbor’s blister, and others.*

In those cases, the quantitative seme can be the component of the nucleus of lexical meaning (*whip*, *sore*, *city*), including marked diminutive suffix [in Russian] (*slash*, *whip*), or the potential seme manifesting in the comparison context (*yard*). On the whole, the significantive mechanism of a proverb consists of actualization of the distinctive seme of quantitative appraisal and its transition into the nucleus zone of lexical meaning. This mechanism is effected by the syntagmatic juxtaposition of two certain words.

Unlike oppositions of the above cohyponyms, a number of quantitative oppositions in proverbs can be classified as thematically non-homogenous. Thus, the invariant meaning of ‘big head – lightweight intellect’ (up to complete witlessness): *Голова велика, а мозгу мало / Big head, but little brain* is realized with the help of contrasting different kinds of containers: *Голова с пивной котел, а ума ни ложки / Head as big as a pot, but no spoonful of sense.*

In other variants the same idea is expressed by words of different thesaurus theme zones and different categorial grammatical characteristics: fair-sized reservoirs are measured against agricultural products: *Голова, что чан, а ума ни на капустный кочан / Head as big as a tun, but not even cabbage-head of sense; Мозговина с короб, а ума с орех / A basketful of skull, but mind is a size of a nut; a container for gathering and storing fruits is contrasted to the smallest bread bit: Голова с лукошко, а мозгу ни крошки / A basket of head, but no crumb of sense or a numeral: Голова с куль, а ума с нуль / Head as a sack, but zero sense; the collocation pointing to the concrete object is contrasted to the negative pronoun: Голова с печное чело, а мозгу совсем ничего / Head as the face of the oven, but no brain.*

Yet, thematic non-homogeneity of such oppositions is not a hindrance to classify them as semantically homogenous oppositions, as they are characterized by similarity of the standard contents, such as quantitative appraisal, likeness of syntactic constructions and functional purpose.

Quantitative appraisal realizing with syntagmatic juxtaposition of words denoting objects different in size, serves as a specific switch between denotative and significative levels of a proverb. It represents the general part of the so called literal meaning and morals of the proverb, the surface level and underlying content levels of a proverbs, the former being incentive for the latter, substantiated meaning. For example, the idea that ‘a small woman easily puts up with a tall man’ is wrapped in the images of a little rodent and a large sheaf:

Мышь конны не боится / A mouse is not afraid of a hay stack.

As for quantitative proper relations of nondiscrete objects of quantification in Russian proverbs, they are predominantly manifested in adverbial-nominal collocations comprising quantifying indicators *many / much, few, more, fewer*. Weather-lore is characterized by analogy relations between events, phenomena in the conditional and consecutive clauses, often lexically supported. Cf. lexical parallels concerning nondiscrete quantification in Russian weather-lore:

Звезд мало на небе – яиц мало будет / Few stars in the sky – there will be few eggs; Много боярышника – много хлебов / Much hawthorn – much grain; Много вишен – и всего много, добрый урожай / Many cherries – lots of everything, good crops; Много еловых шишек – много гороха / Many fir-cones – a lot of beans; Больше ветров – больше яблок / More winds – more apples; Много инея зимою – много орехов / Much hoarfrost in winter – many nuts; Много черники – много картошки / A lot of blueberry – lots of potatoes; Много снега – много хлеба; много воды – много травы / Much snow – a lot of grain, much water – a lot of grass.

At the same time, in proverbs, as mentioned above, contrast oppositions are predominant, including those in quantitative appraisal of *large – small, many – few*:

Кто малым недоволен, тому великое не дано / Who is not satisfied with little, will not be given much; И маленькая рыбка лучше большого таракана / Even a small fish is better than a big cockroach; Малый вор бежит, большой лежит / A thief runs away, a burglar lies down; Велик телом, да мал делом / Big in size, small in deed; Мало пожалеешь, большое потеряешь / Spare little, lose much; Мал грех, да большую вину несет (творит) / A small sin brings much guilt; Велика Федора, да дура; а Иван мал, да удал / Fedora is big, but foolish, Ivan is small, but varmint; Кто ныне мал, завтра велик; а ныне велик – завтра мал! / Today small, tomorrow big; today big, tomorrow small; Маленька добычка лучше большого наклада / A small catch is better than a big disadvantage; Из большого выкроишь, а из малого зубами не натянешь / A big one can be cut, a small one too tight; Много шуму, мало толку / Much cry and little wool; Много званных, да мало избранных / Many are called, but few are chosen; Много – сытно, мало – честно / Much is nourishing, little is honest; Много говорят, да мало делают / They talk much, but do little; Много и того, как два на одного, а мало того, как двое на троих / Much is as two for one, little is as two for three; Много шуму, мало толку / More bark and less bite.

In some special cases of quantification, the objects of quantitative appraisal both in proverbs and in weather-lore, can be characterized through the concept of congruence, which is reflected in explicit form due to parallel structures containing quantity words *many – many*:

Сколько голов, столько и < умов > / So many men, so many minds; Сколько в мае дождей, столько лет быть урожаю / As many rains are in May, as many years will be good crops; Сколько выпало снега на первый день Пасхи – столько будет крови на день праздника «Троицы» / As much snow fell on Easter – as much blood there will be on Whitsun; 9 марта. Вторая встреча весны. / March 9. Second meeting of spring; Сколько проталинок, столько жаворонков / As many thaw holes, as many larks.

4. Conclusions

The performed analysis of quantitative appraisal allows to confirm the diffuzzive, non-homogenous character of appraisive relationships which reflect quantitiveness in the mentality of Russian people mediated by paroemiological units. Different proportions of descriptive and attitudinal meanings in words expressing quantitative appraisal in proverbs leads to a broad understanding of appraisal as a multidimensional process of quantification of an object based on comparison with the existing pattern, sample, stereotype, etc., by reference to the set system of regulations and values adopted in a particular community.

The non-homogeneity of quantitative appraisal is reflected in heterogeneous linguistic means represented in paroemiological units by numerals, quantitative-nominal collocations, adjectival and adverbial markers of quantitative appraisal.

The analysis of quantitative semantics reflection methods in paroemiological units of various types – weather-lore and proverbs – allows to determine both similarities and some differences in predictive and proverbial domains of the Russian language. In particular, lexical selectiveness has been detected on the part of numeric-nominal co-occurrence

in weather-lore and proverbs. Proverbs mostly prefer numerals in a small numerical range, as well as those divided by ten (*ten, hundred, thousand*). Weather-lore texts generally use numerals of a wider numerical range (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 14, 18, 40, 100, and others) with the prevalence of the numerals *three, seven* and *forty* as part of quantitative noun phrases. Numerals in weather-lore are used, as a rule, in exact arithmetical values, while in proverbs and sayings the exact quantitative definiteness of numerals is fictional and of formal character, quantification is characterized by semantic diffuzziness.

With quantitative axiologization of the world, proverbs tend to make contrast oppositions, while weather-lore builds on relations of analogy.

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