

## A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF LITERARY GENRES (WITH REFERENCE TO CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE OF THE ENGLISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES)

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The article is dedicated to contemporary literature of the English speaking countries. A brief overview of various fiction genres and sub-genres widely used in contemporary literature of the English speaking countries is provided. Fantasy sub-genres are elicited and analyzed.

**Keywords:** literature of the English speaking countries, fiction genres, sub-genres, fantasy, legends, fairy tales, tall tales.

**Introduction.** Contemporary literature of the English speaking countries is represented by various fiction genres which emerged during different literary periods. Despite their origin and diversity, they all were developed by English and American writers and became a distinguishing characteristic of contemporary literature of the English speaking countries. Thus, the main purpose of the article is to provide a brief overview of fiction genres in contemporary literature of the English speaking countries and to define more precisely what literature of the English speaking countries is.

**Presentation of basic material of research.** The questions «What is literature?» and «What is contemporary literature of the English speaking countries?» do not look complex at first sight. Although most people have some idea of what the terms «literature» and «contemporary literature of the English speaking countries» mean, these two concepts often remain unclear.

The word «literature» comes from Latin *literatura/litteratura* «learning, a writing, grammar», originally «writing formed with letters» which comes from *littera/littera* which means «letter» [8]. The word literature means «things made from letters». So, literature is the art of written work which can, in some circumstances, refer exclusively to published sources [7].

And yet, what is contemporary literature of the English speaking countries? To tell the truth it is very difficult to draw a clear line as there are many colonial countries in the world where the English language is considered to be official one. But here we shall talk about literature written the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the USA, New Zealand and Australia.

What are the main fiction genres? Under which genre does a literary work fall? Before answering these questions, it is important to clarify the meaning of the word «genre». «Genre» comes from an Old French, *kind, gender* which comes from Latin *genus, gener-; genā-* in Indo-European roots and means *kind, category, or sort, esp of literary or artistic work* [8]. So «genre» is used to describe the style or category of art, literature, music, or any other type of discourse, written or spoken.

A fiction genre therefore means a category of literary composition in which nonfactual descriptions and events are usually invented by its author.

A list of generally acknowledged fiction genres widely used in contemporary literature of the English speaking countries includes: *tall tales, fairy tales, fables, legends, fantasy, young adult fiction, children's literature, by children or juvenilia, early readers, picture books, mystery, historical fiction, realistic fiction, women's fiction.*

**Tall tales.** A tall tale is a fiction genre which is peculiar to literature of the USA. It is an extravagantly

and humorously exaggerated story of the backwoods exploits of an American frontiersman. Originally, tall tales were an oral form of entertainment. Some of them explained the origins of lakes, mountains and canyons, while others depicted the wild adventures of folk heroes.

The best examples of tall tales are: *Bear Lake Monster, Arkansas Travelers, Arizona Weather, Cowboys in Heaven, Connecticut Yankee* [5; 6].

**Fairy Tales.** A fairy tale is a unique fiction genre which is written as a story, usually for children, about elves, hobgoblins, dragons, fairies, or other magical creatures. The examples of fairy tales which represent contemporary literature of the English speaking countries and well-known all over the world include: *Cinderella, Snow White, Hansel and Gretel, Jack and the Beanstalk, The Shoemaker and the Elves, Goldilocks and the Three Bears* [5; 6].

**Fables.** This fiction genre represents a brief allegorical narrative which either illustrates a moral thesis or satirizes negative qualities of human beings. A fable is usually written in verse or prose. The characters of a fable are different animals who talk and act like people while retaining their animal traits.

*The Fighting Roosters and the Eagle* is one the best examples of fables which exist in contemporary literature of the USA [9].

**Legends.** A legend is a story purported to be historical in nature, but without substantiation. Prominent examples of legends which you can find in contemporary literature of the English speaking countries include: *King Arthur, Blackbeard and Robin Hood.*

Legends also refer to anything that inspires a body of stories, or anything of lasting importance or fame. A legend is usually handed down from earlier times, but it continues to evolve with time [19; 20].

**Fantasy** is an imaginative or fanciful work dealing with supernatural or unnatural events or characters. This genre is divided into various sub-genres, namely:

- a) alternative world fantasy,
- b) contemporary fantasy,
- c) medieval fantasy,
- d) juvenile fantasy,
- e) urban fantasy,
- f) historical fantasy,
- g) quest fantasy,
- h) superhero fantasy,
- i) sword & sorcery [2].

**Alternate World** fantasy is a subgenre which involves different worlds hidden within or parallel to our own world. In past times these could be found in a mysterious country, as in Johnathan Swift's best known full-length work, and a classic of English literature «*Gulliver's Travels*». This novel was written in 1726 and amended in 1735.

With the Earth explored, some were envisioned inside a mirror, as with Lewis Carroll's novel «*Through*

the *Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There*» which was written in 1871 and which was the sequel to «*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*» [2].

**Contemporary fantasy** is a subgenre which posits that magical creatures are hidden amongst us. These tales are set in modern times and in deceptively familiar situations. For instance, Neil Richard MacKinnon Gaiman who is a contemporary English author and who has won numerous awards created the novel «*Neverwhere*» in 1996. This novel depicts a vast magical underground London.

Mercedes Ritchie Lackey's «*Diana Tregarde*» novels represent another good example of contemporary fantasy subgenre. Mercedes Ritchie Lackey who is a contemporary American writer brings realistic magic to contemporary Dallas and small town Oklahoma in her novels [2].

**Medieval fantasy** is defined by its name, as these subgenre's stories are set in the period which is in between the ancient or Arthurian worlds and the modern industrial era. Medieval fantasy stories usually feature knights and knaves, often together with sorcerers and dragons. Many medieval fantasy subgenres that are set on Earth or elsewhere have a «pseudomedieval» setting that includes: ox carts, tavern wenches, and swords. You won't be able to find any automobiles, stock brokers, or firearms in these stories [2].

**Juvenile fantasy** is a vast descriptive category, overlapping with the «children's» and «young adult» genres, which has stories written for a younger audience.

Tolkien's «*The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*», better known as «*The Hobbit*» which was first published on September 21, 1937 is a stellar example [2].

**Urban Fantasy** novels are set in a modern, urban environment where werewolves live in abandoned subway stations, or pixies hide in the small spaces of a campus dormitory. In contemporary literature of the USA there is an unwritten rule that if urban fantasy novels involve vampires they must be set in-and-around New Orleans.

One of the most vivid representatives of urban fantasy genre in contemporary literature of the USA is Jody Lynn Nye. She is an American science fiction writer who specializes in science fiction or fantasy action novels and humor and whose novels often incorporate unusual characters.

Robert Weinberg who is also a contemporary American writer and whose work spans several genres including non-fiction, science fiction, horror, and comic books is another famous representative of urban fantasy genre. In his novel «*A Logical Magician*» which features adaptable beings such as «mall nymphs», a computer nerd is up against ancient evil [2].

**Historical fantasy** is the genre's answer to historical fiction. The setting of history fantasy novels is usually a specific period from Earth's history but with fantastic elements blended in. Two best examples of historical fantasy genre which can be found in contemporary literature of the English speaking countries are «*Soldier of the Mist*» by Gene Wolfe and «*Tigana*» by Guy Gavriel Kay [2].

Gene Wolfe is an American science fiction and fantasy writer. He is a prolific novelist and has won many science fiction and fantasy literary awards.

Guy Gavriel Kay who is a Canadian author of fantasy fiction and whose novels are set in fictional realms which resemble real places during real historical periods has already written 12 novels. Some of Guy Gavriel Kay's works have been translated into more than 25 languages.

**Quest fantasies** involve just that. It's a descriptive category, in which the main hero is involved in some perilous all-consuming quest.

One of the most successful works written in this genre is «*Two Hearts*» by Peter Beagle. In this novelette nine-year-old Sooz sets off alone to free her village from a murderous gryphon.

Although Terry Goodkind is an American writer who is known for the epic fantasy «*The Sword of Truth*» series his novel «*Wizard's First Rule*» is another fine example of quest fantasy genre which can be found in contemporary literature of the English speaking countries [2].

**Superhero fantasy** needs no introduction. Whether in films or comic books or novels, characters such as Superman and Spiderman are familiar indeed. Some authors even create their own new superheroes, incorporating familiar tropes. These superheroes may gain their special abilities from magic or technology or something else, and usually those will far exceed anything deemed plausible by science [2].

**Sword & Sorcery** tales embody the action-packed aspect of fantasy, with powerful barbarians clearing a bloody swath across their pseudomedieval worlds [2].

The best example of a fictional sword and sorcery genre is «*Conan the Barbarian*» by Robert Ervin Howard who was an American pulp writer of fantasy. Conan the Barbarian consisted of a series of fantasy stories published in «*Weird Tales*» magazine in 1932.

**Young adult fiction** is a literary genre which is selected for reading by young adults, ages 13 to 18. It may be published specifically for young adults or for the general public which shares the fundamental elements of fiction with other stories: character, plot, setting, theme, and style. This literary genre portrays an adolescent as the protagonist, rather than an adult or a child. The subject matter and story lines are typically consistent with the age and experience of the main character. Themes in these stories often focus on the challenges of youth. Young adult fiction can also comprise several sub-genres. For example, **amateur sleuth** stories are defined by their name. The young protagonist(s) investigate crimes, sometimes bending the rules, even taking a few serious risks [5; 6].

**Children's literature** is a genre which presents stories for readers and listeners up to about age twelve and is often illustrated. Children's literature usually includes books that are written by children, books written specifically for children, or books that are chosen by/for children [1].

**By Children or Juvenilia** is a small but genuine subgenre. These commercially published tales are written, in full, by a child. In modern times, several nonprofit organizations are dedicated to publishing young writers.

A famous example of this genre in contemporary literature of the English speaking countries is Daisy Ashford's 1919 British novella «*The Young Visitors, or, Mister Salteena's Plan*». The novella «*Visitors*» remains in print, and preserves then nine-year-old Daisy Ashford's spelling mistakes.

The youngest known author, certainly of prose in English, is Dorothy Straight of Washington, DC. She was four when she wrote a story «*How the World Began*». Dorothy Straight dedicated it for her grandmother in 1962. The story was published in 1964.

**Early Readers** are intended to help children master the basic skill of reading. The text is usually in large print, and most of the words are just one syllable long. Most have illustrations, but the kids are supposed to gain the meaning of-and-from the printed words. The

most prominent examples that represent this fiction genre are the famous old «see Spot run» books.

**Picture books** are vividly illustrated, and have minimal printed text. They are intended for a parent, teacher, or caregiver to read aloud. In recent times these books have gained more variety, with different lifestyles and ethnic groups appearing within.

Next fiction genre which is worth noticing is **adventure**. It pertains to an exciting or very unusual experience, participation in exciting undertakings or enterprises, a bold, usually risky undertaking, or hazardous action of uncertain outcome.

**Mystery** is a literary genre whose plot involves a crime or other event that remains puzzlingly unsettled until the very end.

**Historical fiction.** Literary genre pertaining to, treating, or characteristic of history or past events, based on or reconstructed from an event, custom, or style, in the past, or having once existed or lived in the real world, as opposed to being part of legend or fiction or as distinguished from religious belief.

**Realistic fiction** is a literary genre which is interested in, concerned with, or based on what is real, practical, pertaining to, characterized by, or given to the representation in literature or art of things as they really are, or resembling or simulating life.

**Women's fiction.** There is no harder genre to define than women's fiction. Is it fiction for women or fiction written by women? Is it feminist fiction? Is it

any book with a female protagonist? Is it anything that just wouldn't appeal to most men? Does it have to be about a family or does that make it a family drama and is that different? Must the protagonist be over thirty but under sixty?

Women's fiction is a specific literary genre about a woman or women. It is the genre which is dedicated to self-discovery, self-preservation, self-acceptance or self-improvement of the main character. All others influence the development of the protagonist, but do not save her. In women's fiction, the main character saves herself. Women's fiction tackles extraordinary real life issues and emotions [10].

**Conclusions.** The provided overview allows us to conclude that contemporary literature of the English speaking countries is characterized by the diversity of fiction genres which due to globalization and the fact that they were written on topics and things that the readers could identify easily helped them become popular and recognizable all over the world.

**Prospects of further research.** However, the undertaken study is not at the end of all aspects of a problem of development of genres in literature of the English speaking countries. Challenging directions of further scientific research can be as follows: the investigation of the diversity of nonfiction genres and sub-genres in contemporary literature of the English speaking countries.

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## КОРОТКИЙ ОГЛЯД ЛІТЕРАТУРНИХ ЖАНРІВ (НА МАТЕРІАЛАХ СУЧАСНОЇ ЛІТЕРАТУРИ АНГЛОМОВНИХ КРАЇН)

#### Анотація

Стаття присвячена сучасній літературі англомовних країн. Проведено короткий огляд різноманітних жанрів, широко вживаних у сучасній літературі англомовних країн. Встановлені і проаналізовані різновиди жанру фентезі.

**Ключові слова:** літературі англомовних країн, жанри художньої літератури, різновиди жанрів, фентезі, легенди, казки, вигадки.

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## КРАТКИЙ ОБЗОР ЛИТЕРАТУРНЫХ ЖАНРОВ (НА МАТЕРИАЛАХ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ АНГЛОЯЗЫЧНЫХ СТРАН)

### Аннотация

Статья посвящена современной литературе англоязычных стран. Проведен краткий обзор разнообразных жанров, широко используемых в современной литературе англоязычных стран. Установлены и проанализированы разновидности жанра фэнтези.

**Ключевые слова:** литература англоязычных стран, жанры художественной литературы, разновидности жанров, фэнтези, легенды, сказки, выдумки.

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## СПЕЦИФИКА ЧИСЕЛ ОТ 1 ДО 10 ВО ФРАЗЕОЛОГИЗМАХ РУССКОГО И ПЕРСИДСКОГО ЯЗЫКОВ

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В статье рассмотрены специфические характеристики употребления чисел от 1 до 10 во фразеологизмах русского и персидского (фарси) языков. Предложено определение категории количества. Проанализирована сущность фразеологизмов и роль чисел в их построении. Рассмотрены конкретные примеры с числительными «один», «два», «четыре», «семь». Определены главные значения числительных как наиболее архаических пластов лексики в составе русских и иранских фразеологизмов.

**Ключевые слова:** русский язык, персидский язык (фарси), числа, целые числа, «священные» числа, числительные, количество, категория, специфика, история, фразеологизмы, пословицы, поговорки.

**Актуальность темы.** Весь ход сначала элементарного приспособления человека к окружающему миру, а потом и научных поисков человечества был неразрывно связан с использованием количественных показателей, измерений, вычислений. В равной степени это касается таких ведущих стран современного мира как Россия и Иран, а также русского и персидского языка.

Определяющей чертой современного научного познания является его углубленная математизация. Без математики, – и теоретической, и прикладной, – невозможны были бы самые важные научные открытия и технические достижения, которые характеризуют наше время – теория относительности и квантовая механика, расщепление атома и овладение атомной энергией, создание компьютеров и освоения космоса и т.п.

Число – одно из главнейших понятий окружающего нас мира, которое во многих случаях может выступать как мера, количества чего-то. Безусловно, что число заняло важнейшее место в словесном выражении мировоззрения русского и персидского народов (в том числе через фразеологизмы).

**Целью данной статьи** является анализ данных относительно специфики употребления чисел от 1 до 10 во фразеологизмах русского и персидского языков.

**Состояние изучения темы.** Специфике чисел в различных выражениях русского языка, в том числе фразеологизмов (пословиц и поговорок) посвящены исследования А. Баранова [2], Т. Лукиновой [10, 11], М. Худяковой [16], Т. Фроловой, М. Маркиной-Гурджи [17]. Персидские фразеологизмы также нашли свое отображение в научной

мысли – среди переведенных на русский язык авторов можно отметить Д.Бабазаде (2009 г.) [1] и А. Короглы (1973 г.) [8]. Несмотря на уже проведенные научные разработки указанная тема в силу своей многогранности конечно же требует дальнейшего исследования. Кроме этого, подавляющее большинство работ иранских ученых, посвященных фразеологизмам в персидском языке (Б. Водждани, М.Д. Казази, Хасанзадех и т.п.), не переведены на русский язык, что также обуславливает значимость и актуальность этой статьи.

**Изложение основного материала статьи.** Категория количества в языке и в культуре русского и персидского народов отображает одну из наиболее общих свойств бытия. Она является необходимым элементом познания действительности, а число и величина, в которых конкретизируется количественная определенность мира, – неотъемлемые составные части его практического освоения, всей активной деятельности русского человека. Кроме числа и величины, количество в культуре народов России и Ирана находит свое воплощение также в объеме, в степени и интенсивности развития тех или других сторон объекта, в темпах протекания процессов, в пространственно-временных свойствах явлений.

Так, относительно значения чисел в русском языке высказывались многие российские исследователи. Т.Б. Лукинова считает, что в русском языке категория количества может быть выражена разными средствами. Среди них самыми важными являются морфологические (прежде всего грамматическая категория числа) и лексические. Класс слов, которые обозначают число и количество, вы-