

Linguoculturological Analysis of Selected Food-Related Phraseological Units in English and Uzbek

ESHKUVVATOVA GULASAL ABDULLOKIZI
Termiz State Pedagogical Institute, Uzbekistan

Abstract

This article presents a comprehensive linguoculturological analysis of food-related phraseological units in English and Uzbek languages. The study examines how national culture, values, traditions, and worldview are reflected through gastronomic phraseological expressions. Based on the linguoculturological approach, the research analyzes phraseological units with food components, identifies their inner forms, cultural connotations, and semantic features. The study reveals both universal characteristics and culture-specific features of gastronomic phraseology in both languages. The findings demonstrate that food-related phraseological units serve as cultural markers representing national identity, historical experiences, social relationships, and value systems of both nations. The research contributes to the fields of linguoculturology, comparative linguistics, and translation studies, providing practical insights for cross-cultural communication and language education.

Keywords: Linguoculturology, gastronomic phraseological units, cultural semantics, national identity, comparative analysis, English language, Uzbek language, cultural code, inner form, cultural connotation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language and culture are inextricably linked, with each serving as both a repository and a reflection of the other. As V.

Humboldt first highlighted, language conveys the objective reality of the nation and embodies the cultural spirit of its speakers [1]. This fundamental relationship is particularly evident in phraseological units, which are stable word groups with partially or fully transferred meanings that encapsulate the collective wisdom, values, and worldview of a language community.

Among the various categories of phraseological units, those related to food and gastronomy occupy a special position. Food is a universal human experience that nourishes not only bodies but also social relationships, cultural identity, and spiritual values. Gastronomic phraseological units represent a rich source of cultural information, reflecting the values, beliefs, customs, and practices of a society. These expressions often carry metaphorical meanings and cultural connotations that reveal insights into how people think, feel, and interact with the world around them.

Both English and Uzbek cultures assign significant importance to food, which is reflected in the abundance and diversity of food-related phraseological units in both languages. However, the specific foods used and their associated connotations often reflect the unique cultural contexts and historical experiences of each language community.

The comparative study of gastronomic phraseological units in English and Uzbek is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the broader understanding of how language and culture interact in shaping everyday communication. Second, it provides insights into the cultural values, traditions, and social practices of both language communities. Third, it addresses practical challenges in translation and cross-cultural communication, as food-related idioms often present difficulties due to their cultural specificity.

Furthermore, the study of gastronomic phraseological units within a linguoculturological framework reveals how national culture, values, customs, and worldview are expressed through gastronomic terms, phrases, and linguistic units regarding food. The analysis of cultural codes and semantic fields enables identification of similarities and differences in the food culture of the two peoples.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Linguoculturology is the science of studying national culture through language, examining the correlation between language and culture within a specific cultural context. This interdisciplinary field emerged from the recognition that language is not merely a system of signs but a cultural phenomenon that embodies the spiritual and material values of a nation.

In the Uzbek linguistic tradition, scholars such as O. Muminov, D. Ashurova, and others have contributed significantly to the development of linguoculturological approaches, particularly in the analysis of phraseological units. Their work has established that phraseological units are the wealth of a nation, with sources closely related to nature, economic structure, history, culture, way of life, oral literature, fiction, art, science, and customs of the place where a particular people lives [2].

Phraseological units, also known as idioms or set expressions, are stable word groups with partially or fully transferred meanings. According to A. V. Kunin, “phraseological units are stable word groups with partially or fully transferred meanings” [3].

Phraseological units are considered key objects of linguoculturological study because they embody cultural memory and transmit cultural values across generations. They are ready-made word groups used in speech or texts without significant changes, which ensures their stability and cultural authenticity. As such, they serve as linguocultremes – units that represent cultural phenomena and reflect the worldview of a particular linguistic community.

Gastronomic discourse encompasses not only lexical units regarding food but also the expression of worldview, values, and cultural life through language. Each nation displays its historical, social, religious, and national characteristics through its food culture. Gastronomic discourse analysis examines how food-related lexical units, phraseological phrases, cultural metaphors, and everyday communication samples reflect national culture.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural semantics, within this framework, investigates the meanings and connotations associated with gastronomic terms and expressions. For instance, words like *pilaf*, *bread*, *somsa* and *norin* in Uzbek, or “fish and chips”, “roast beef,” “apple pie” and “pudding” in English, carry specific cultural connotations beyond their literal meanings. These connotations are shaped by historical experiences, religious beliefs, social norms, and daily practices.

English is rich in food-related idioms that are utilized in everyday conversation, literature, journalism, and politics. These idioms often express meanings far from their literal interpretation, making them both intriguing and challenging for language learners. The origins of these idioms often stem from historical, agricultural, or cultural contexts in which certain foods have symbolic significance.

- **“Piece of cake”**: meaning something very easy to do. This idiom became popular during World War II when Royal Air Force pilots used it to describe easy missions. It reflects the association of cake with indulgence and pleasure.
- **“Spill the beans”**: meaning to reveal a secret. This may originate from ancient Greek voting practices where beans were used as ballots; a spilled container could reveal results prematurely.
- **“Bring home the bacon”**: meaning to earn money to support one’s family. This idiom dates back to the 12th-century English tradition of Dunmow, where a side of bacon was rewarded to a man who could prove he had not quarreled with his wife for a year and a day.
- **“Apple of one’s eye”**: meaning someone who is deeply loved and cherished. Rooted in biblical references to the apple of the eye being a precious and protected part of the body.
- **“Cool as a cucumber”**: meaning extremely calm and composed under pressure.

- **“Couch potato”**: meaning a person who spends a lot of time sitting and watching television.
- **“The icing on the cake”**: meaning something extra that makes a good situation even better.
- **“Chew the fat”**: meaning to have a leisurely conversation.

These idioms reflect English cultural attitudes towards food, including the association of food with comfort, pleasure, and social interaction.

Uzbek, as a language rich in cultural traditions, contains numerous food-related idioms that reflect the agricultural heritage, communal eating practices, and hospitality values of Uzbek culture. Many Uzbek idioms involving food are tied to traditional practices and reflect the cultural significance of hospitality and communal values.

- ***Xamirdanqilsug‘urganday***: meaning very easy, equivalent to “piece of cake” in English. This idiom literally means “like pulling a hair from dough”, reflecting the importance of dough and bread in Uzbek culture. The expression *Xamirdanqilsug‘urganday* is one of the important linguocultural phrases in the gastronomic lexicon of the Uzbek language. It is a phraseological unit of the national lifestyle and labor activity of the Uzbek people (making dough). In the Uzbek mentality, the concept of ease is expressed through an everyday, familiar process. Although it is functionally equivalent to the English expression “piece of cake”, it differs culturally and semantically, since the attitudes and values of the English and Uzbek people towards food are different.
- ***Non sinmayturib***: meaning before starting a meal or an important task, literally “before the bread break.” In Uzbek culture, this is the first thing that is done when a guest sits down at the table. The expression “before the bread is broken” is an expression used to describe a task that is done quickly.

- *Tuzbermoq*: means to help or assist someone, literally "to give salt" – "to give food". This reflects the cultural importance of hospitality and generosity in Uzbek society.
- *Jon kuydirmasangjononaqayda, toqqachiqmasangdo 'lanaqayda*: it is emphasized that nothing can be achieved without hard work.
- *Oshinibermoq*: – meaning to celebrate a happy day with friends at the table by sharing food.

These idioms reflect the centrality of food, particularly bread, pilaf, and salt, in Uzbek culture, as well as the values of hospitality, community, and respect for agricultural traditions .

This study adopts a comparative and qualitative approach to analyzing selected food-related phraseological units in English and Uzbek. The methodology is based on the linguoculturological paradigm, which examines the correlation between language and culture within specific cultural contexts . The research design incorporates both descriptive and analytical components, with the aim of identifying linguistic forms, semantic features, cultural connotations, and interlingual relationships.

Following the framework established by S. Florin and adopted in Uzbek linguistic studies, the analysis identifies three types of interlingual equivalence:

1. **Full equivalence**: Complete correspondence of lexico-semantic, morphological, and syntactic structure, maintaining the communicative purpose and uniformity of information description.
2. **Partial equivalence**: Absence of a full alternative version in one language, or presence of a partial alternative in translation [4].
3. **Lack of equivalence (non-equivalence)**: Absence of equivalents in the target language, often involving realities belonging to the original language.

The most productive component in English phraseological units is “cake/pie,” appearing in expressions such as “piece of cake,” “easy as pie” and “icing on the cake.” In Uzbek, the most productive component is “non” (bread), appearing in expressions such as *non sindirmoq*, *non sinmayturib*. This reflects the centrality of bread in Uzbek food culture and the centrality of sweet baked goods in English food culture [5].

In Uzbek culture, hospitality is a fundamental value, reflected in numerous food-related phraseological units. The idiom *tuzbermoq* (to give salt) associates salt with generosity and assistance, reflecting the cultural practice of offering salt and food to guests. Similarly, *non sindirmoq* (to break bread) symbolizes sharing and social bonding. The phrase *non sinmayturib* (before the bread breaks) shows how bread serves as a marker of social time and relationships.

In English culture, hospitality is also reflected in food-related idioms, but with different imagery. “Bring home the bacon” emphasizes providing for the family, while “breadwinner” (though not a phraseological unit in the strict sense) reflects the same concept. The English idiom “eat someone out of house and home” reflects concerns about excessive consumption by guests, suggesting a different social attitude towards hospitality.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Both languages use food imagery to conceptualize success and achievement. Uzbek idioms emphasize effort and agricultural work: *mehnatningmevasishirin* (the fruit of labor is sweet), *toqqachiqmasangdo‘lanayda* [6] (no pain, no gain), and *bug‘oyeksangbug‘doy, arpaeksangarpao‘rasan* (you reap what you sow). These idioms reflect an agricultural worldview where success is achieved through sustained effort.

English idioms emphasize ease and reward: “piece of cake” suggests effortless success, “bring home the bacon” emphasizes the material reward, and “the icing on the cake” emphasizes added benefits. This difference reflects contrasting cultural attitudes towards work and reward: Uzbek culture emphasizing

the necessity of effort, and English culture emphasizing the pleasures of reward.

Both languages use food imagery to express affection and value. The English idiom “apple of one’s eye” [7] expresses deep love and cherishing. The Uzbek equivalent *ko‘zimningoq-u qorasi* (the white and black of my eye) uses visual imagery similar to the English idiom, though without a gastronomic component.

The difference is that Uzbek expresses affection through somatic imagery (the eye), while English uses a food metaphor (the apple) [8]. This reflects different cultural conceptualizations of love: in Uzbek, love is associated with vision and seeing, while in English, love is associated with sweetness and pleasure.

In conclusion, it can be said that gastronomic vocabulary is not only a lexical wealth of a language, but also an invaluable resource that reflects the cultural identity, historical experience and worldview of a people. Studying it allows for a deeper understanding of the complex and interesting relationship between language and culture.

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ESHKUVVATOVA GULASAL ABDULLOKIZI

LECTURER,
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN
LANGUAGES IN HUMANITIES,
TERMIZ STATE PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE,
TERMEZ, UZBEKISTAN.