

## GASTRONOMIC PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS AS REFLECTIONS OF NATIONAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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**Dilfuza Iskandarova**

*EFL teacher of Uzbekistan State World  
Languages University at Faculty of  
English philology, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.  
E-mail: d.iskandarova@uzswlu.uz*

### **Abstract**

The present study examines food-based phraseological units in English and Uzbek from a linguocultural perspective. Phraseological units preserve collective memory, reflect national mentality, and embody cultural values transmitted across generations. The article investigates semantic, structural, and cultural peculiarities of idioms containing food components and analyzes their role in representing national identity. The research applies comparative, descriptive, semantic, and linguocultural methods to the analysis of English and Uzbek phraseological units associated with bread, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and national dishes. The findings demonstrate that gastronomic phraseology serves as a cultural code through which customs, traditions, religious beliefs, and social norms are represented. The study identifies both universal and nationally specific features in the phraseological systems of the two languages. English food idioms frequently characterize personal traits, emotions, and social behavior, whereas Uzbek phraseological units emphasize labor, hospitality, morality, and family relationships. The research also reveals the historical and etymological origins of food idioms in mythology, folklore, religion, literature, and oral traditions. The article concludes that phraseological units with food components function as valuable linguistic sources for understanding intercultural communication and the interaction between language, cognition, and culture.

### **Keywords**

phraseological units, linguoculturology, food idioms, gastronomic phraseology, national identity, English language, Uzbek language, cultural semantics, intercultural communication, metaphor

### **Introduction**

Language is not only a means of communication but also a repository of national culture and historical memory. Every linguistic unit carries information about the worldview, mentality, customs, and traditions of the people who use it. Among different linguistic phenomena, phraseological units occupy a special position because they preserve collective experience accumulated throughout centuries. Idioms and fixed expressions are deeply rooted in the cultural consciousness of a nation and often reveal national values more vividly than ordinary lexical items.

In contemporary linguistics, phraseology has become one of the central areas of linguocultural studies. Scholars increasingly recognize that phraseological units reflect national consciousness and serve as indicators of cultural identity. According to M.I. Rasulova, idioms consolidate everything specific to a nation, including its way of life, traditions, and national psychology. Phraseological units therefore function as linguistic manifestations of cultural cognition.

Food-related phraseological units represent one of the most expressive layers of phraseology because food itself occupies an essential place in human life and culture. Culinary traditions, methods of preparing food, and attitudes toward eating differ significantly among nations and become reflected in language. Gastronomic phraseology preserves cultural stereotypes, symbolic meanings, and social practices associated with nutrition and hospitality.

The relationship between language and culture was thoroughly explored by V.A. Maslova, who emphasized that linguocultural studies investigate mentality, customs, rituals, traditions, and civilization through linguistic material. Similarly, V.N. Telia described phraseology as a “mirror” reflecting national and cultural identity. According to her theory, phraseological units are closely associated with myths, stereotypes, symbols, and collective cultural standards.

Food idioms possess particularly strong cultural specificity because they are connected with national cuisine. Uzbek phraseology includes numerous idioms containing names of traditional dishes such as *palov*, *somsa*, *lag'mon*, *qatlama*, and *zog'ora*. English phraseology, by contrast, frequently incorporates bread, pie, cake, butter, milk, apples, grapes, and fish. These lexical differences reveal distinct cultural priorities and culinary traditions.

The significance of food phraseology lies not only in its figurative meaning but also in its ability to transmit cultural knowledge. Food idioms reveal attitudes toward labor, morality, family relations, emotions, success, and social behavior. They often emerge from myths, folklore, religion, literature, and historical events, making them important objects of linguistic and cultural analysis.

The relevance of the present study is determined by the growing interest in intercultural communication and comparative linguistics. Understanding phraseological units with food components contributes to better comprehension of cultural differences and similarities between nations. Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek gastronomic phraseology allows researchers to identify universal cognitive patterns as well as nationally specific conceptualizations of reality.

The aim of the article is to investigate linguocultural characteristics of English and Uzbek phraseological units with food components and to determine their semantic, structural, and cultural peculiarities.

### **Literature Review**

Phraseology has been studied extensively in linguistics, semantics, and cultural studies. Researchers emphasize that phraseological units represent one of the richest sources for understanding national mentality and collective consciousness.

V.N. Telia developed the linguocultural approach to phraseology and argued that phraseological units preserve cultural stereotypes and value systems. Her theory established the foundation for later studies in cultural linguistics and phraseology.

V.G. Gak and M.L. Kovshova also emphasized the national specificity of phraseological units and their connection with cultural symbolism.

In Uzbek linguistics, the works of M.I. Rasulova and D.U. Ashurova contributed significantly to the study of linguocultural semantics and phraseological categorization.

Research on gastronomic phraseology demonstrates that food idioms are universal linguistic phenomena existing in all languages. According to M.E. Kaskova and colleagues, culinary terminology functions as a conceptual constant in intercultural communication because food reflects both material and symbolic aspects of culture.

Studies devoted to fruit and vegetable idioms indicate that many food-related expressions emerge from metaphorical associations based on taste, color, texture, and shape. Sweet fruits often symbolize positive qualities, while sour or rotten products may convey negative meanings.

Despite extensive research in phraseology, comparative linguocultural studies of English and Uzbek food idioms remain relatively limited. Therefore, the present research contributes to filling this gap by providing a systematic comparative analysis.

### **Methodology**

The present study employs several linguistic research methods to investigate food-based phraseological units in English and Uzbek languages. The comparative method was applied to identify similarities and differences between phraseological units containing food components in both languages. The descriptive method enabled the interpretation of semantic and structural features of idiomatic expressions. Linguocultural analysis was used to determine the relationship between phraseological units and national culture, mentality, customs, and traditions. Semantic analysis helped identify figurative meanings, metaphorical structures, and evaluative connotations embedded in food idioms, while the etymological method was applied to investigate their historical origins in mythology, folklore, religion, literature, and oral traditions. The empirical material for the study consists of phraseological units collected from English and Uzbek dictionaries, literary works, folklore texts, and scientific publications devoted to phraseology and linguocultural studies.

## **Results**

### *Food Phraseology as a Reflection of National Culture*

The conducted analysis demonstrates that food phraseological units preserve cultural information and reflect national identity. Gastronomic expressions embody traditions, social norms, religious beliefs, and historical experience.

Uzbek food idioms are strongly associated with hospitality, labor, family relations, and moral values. English food phraseology more frequently describes emotions, personality traits, behavior, and social interactions.

For example, the Uzbek idiom *“ishlab yegan zog‘arang tanangga yog‘dek yoqar”* emphasizes the importance of honest labor and earned livelihood. Similarly, the English expression *“bread and butter”* symbolizes a source of income and economic stability.

### *Semantic Classification of Food Idioms*

The analysis revealed several semantic groups of food phraseological units.

#### *1. Idioms Characterizing Human Qualities*

English:

*“Nutty as a fruitcake”* – mentally unstable;

*“Cool as a cucumber”* – calm and composed;

*“Bad apple”* – a problematic person.

Uzbek:

*“Qo‘y og‘zidan cho‘p olmagan”* – extremely gentle person;

*“Og‘zida qatiq uvutmoq”* – remain silent and thoughtful.

#### *2. Idioms Expressing Success and Failure*

English:

“Piece of cake” – something easy;

“You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs” – success requires sacrifice.

Uzbek:

“Og’zi oshga yetdi” – finally achieved success;

“Tarouzi qo’ltig’idan tushdi” – became disappointed after failure.

### 3. Idioms Related to Labor and Livelihood

English:

“Bread and butter” – main source of income;

“Take the bread out of someone’s mouth” – deprive someone of livelihood.

Uzbek:

“Non topmoq” – earn a living;

“Noni butun” – financially stable.

### Bread Symbolism in English and Uzbek Cultures

Bread occupies a central position in both English and Uzbek phraseology. However, the symbolic meanings differ significantly.

In English culture, bread is mainly associated with income, economic survival, and social stability. Expressions such as “breadwinner” and “bread and butter” reflect this conceptualization.

In Uzbek culture, *non* (bread) possesses sacred significance and symbolizes honesty, blessing, prosperity, and respect. Uzbek traditions prohibit wasting bread, placing it upside down, or disrespecting it in any form. Consequently, phraseological units with *non* often carry ethical and spiritual connotations.

### Fruit and Vegetable Symbolism

The study identified numerous idioms containing fruits and vegetables. The apple is particularly important in English linguoculture.

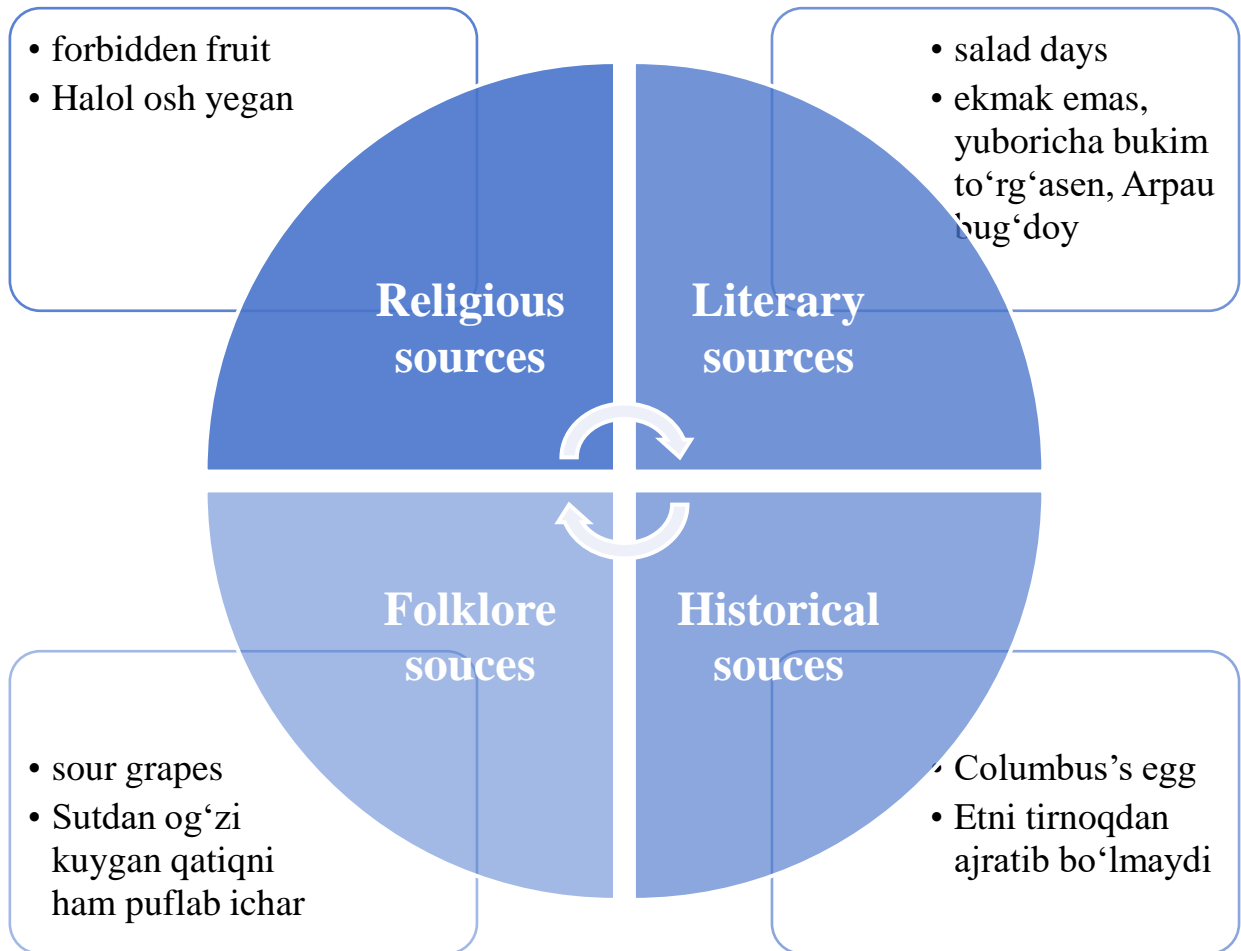
English Idiom	Uzbek Equivalent	Meaning
Apple of one’s eye	Ko’z qorachig’i	Someone very dear
Apple of discord	Janjalning uyasi	Source of conflict
Rotten apple	Bundan non chiqmaydi	Bad person
Apples and oranges	Yer bilan osmondek	Completely different

The symbolic importance of apples originates from mythology and Christianity, where apples were associated with temptation, wisdom, and immortality.

Vegetable idioms also reflect cultural experience. English expressions involving beans, cucumbers, or grapes often derive from agricultural traditions.

Uzbek phraseology frequently includes rice, yogurt, and melons because of their importance in Central Asian cuisine.

*Etymological Sources of Food Idioms*



The etymological origins of food-related phraseological units in English and Uzbek languages are closely connected with religion, literature, folklore, and historical events, which significantly influenced the formation of national linguistic consciousness. Religious sources played an important role in the emergence of many English idioms derived from the Bible, including “forbidden fruit” (something attractive but prohibited), “manna from heaven” (an unexpected blessing), “Adam’s apple,” “the apple of one’s eye,” “milk and honey,” and “eat the bitter bread of banishment.” Similarly, Islamic and Arabic traditions influenced Uzbek phraseology through moral and spiritual teachings reflected in expressions such as “halol osh yegan” (honest and righteous person), “asal ichmoq” (to find a cure or blessing), and “non ursin” (an oath connected with bread as a sacred symbol). Literary sources also enriched phraseological systems in both languages. In English literature, William Shakespeare introduced numerous gastronomic

expressions such as “salad days,” “cool as a cucumber,” “cakes and ale,” and “the world is my oyster.” In Uzbek classical literature, Alisher Navoi and Yusuf Khas Hajib frequently employed food metaphors to express moral values, justice, patience, and generosity. Yusuf Khas Hajib's epic *Qutadg'u Bilig* is noteworthy in this respect: “*Shakarni shu kishi yeydiki, unga mobodo zo'rlik-zulm o'tgan bo'lsa, Va dargohimga kelib mendan haq-adolat topsa.*”

In Alisher Navoi's works, in particular, in the epic "Khamisa" it is possible to observe the use of food names. Excerpts from the epic "Hayratul-abror" testify to this: “*Ekmak emas, yuboricha bukim to'rg'asen, Arpau bo'g'doy sochibon*”- one will be rewarded according to his deeds.

Folklore and oral traditions also served as productive sources of phraseological units. English idioms such as “sour grapes,” “spill the beans,” “bread always falls on the buttered side,” and “too many cooks spoil the broth” originated from folk wisdom and everyday observations. Uzbek folklore similarly produced expressions like “*Sutdan og'zi kuygan qatiqni ham puflab ichar*” (a person once harmed becomes overly cautious), “*Ayron osh bo'lmas, nodon bosh bo'lmas,*” “*Chuchvarani xom sanabsiz,*” and “*Guruch kurmaksiz bo'lmaydi.*” Historical events and legends also contributed to the development of food idioms. English phraseology includes expressions such as “Columbus’s egg,” “apple of discord,” and “fish and chips,” which reflect historical and cultural realities of British society. In the work “*Devonu-lug'otit turk*” “*Etli, tirnoli ezirmas*” - “*Etni tirnoqdan ajratib bo'lmaydi*”. Thus, the sources of formation of phraseology, which includes proverbs, aphorisms, phrases, sayings, wise sayings of the Turkic, All-Turkic and Uzbek languages, are closely connected with the ancient history of the Turkic people, tribes and clans.

### Discussion

The findings demonstrate that food phraseology represents a complex interaction between language, cognition, and culture. Phraseological units preserve collective cultural experience and function as symbolic representations of national mentality.

The similarities between English and Uzbek food idioms indicate universal cognitive mechanisms shared by humanity. People across cultures associate food with survival, emotions, morality, and social relations. Consequently, many idioms possess semantically equivalent meanings despite structural differences.

However, cultural specificity remains the dominant feature of gastronomic phraseology. Uzbek food idioms reflect collective values such as hospitality, respect for bread, family unity, and labor ethics. English phraseology more frequently focuses on individuality, emotional states, and personal behavior.

The symbolic meanings of food products are determined by historical, geographical, and religious factors. For instance, apples became culturally significant in English due to Biblical and mythological traditions, whereas bread occupies sacred status in Uzbek culture because of agricultural practices and social customs.

The study also confirms that phraseological units are highly resistant to linguistic change because they preserve archaic cultural knowledge. Even when literal meanings become less relevant in modern society, idioms continue functioning as cultural symbols.

From the perspective of intercultural communication, understanding food idioms is essential because literal translation often fails to convey cultural meaning. Comparative linguocultural analysis therefore contributes to translation studies and foreign language teaching.

### **Conclusion**

The conducted research demonstrates that food-based phraseological units constitute an important component of national linguistic identity in both English and Uzbek languages. Gastronomic phraseology reflects historical experience, mentality, traditions, values, and cultural symbolism.

The comparative analysis revealed both universal and nationally specific characteristics. Universal features arise from common human experiences associated with food and survival, whereas cultural differences result from unique culinary traditions and social practices.

English food idioms predominantly characterize personality traits, emotions, and social behavior. Uzbek phraseological units emphasize labor, morality, hospitality, and family relations. Bread occupies symbolic importance in both cultures, although its connotations differ. The etymological analysis showed that food idioms originate from religion, mythology, literature, folklore, oral traditions, and historical events. These sources contribute to the richness and cultural depth of phraseological systems.

The study confirms that phraseological units with food components serve as valuable linguistic resources for understanding intercultural communication and national worldview. Future research may focus on cognitive, pragmatic, and translation aspects of gastronomic phraseology in other languages and cultures.

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