

**GASTRONOMIC VOCABULARY AND PHRASEOLOGY:
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PROVERBS AND SAYINGS IN
ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES**

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Annotation. This article explores the use of gastronomic vocabulary and phraseology within proverbs and sayings in English and Uzbek, highlighting how food-related expressions reflect cultural values, everyday life, and national identity. By conducting a comparative linguistic and cultural analysis, the study reveals similarities and differences in the metaphorical and symbolic meanings of food items across the two languages. The research demonstrates that gastronomic phraseology is a rich source of ethnolinguistic information, serving not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a reflection of historical development, mentality, and traditions of both nations. The paper also identifies common conceptual domains such as bread, salt, meat, and tea, and examines their pragmatic roles in forming idiomatic expressions. The findings contribute to cross-cultural understanding and offer insights into the ways figurative language shapes and reflects worldview.

Keywords: gastronomic phraseology, proverbs, comparative linguistics, English, Uzbek, cultural semantics, idiomatic expressions, food metaphors.

Introduction.

Language is not only a means of communication but also a repository of cultural knowledge, beliefs, and traditions. Among the many facets of language that mirror the worldview of a people, proverbs and sayings occupy a unique place. These concise and figurative expressions often reflect collective experiences, moral values, and social norms. One of the most vivid and culturally loaded aspects of such expressions is gastronomic vocabulary—words and phrases related to food, cooking, and eating. Gastronomic phraseology plays an important role in shaping idiomatic language across cultures, often serving as a metaphorical vehicle for conveying abstract meanings through concrete imagery. This article focuses on a comparative analysis of proverbs and sayings containing gastronomic elements in English and Uzbek languages. Both languages, though originating from different linguistic families and cultural traditions, exhibit a rich array of food-related expressions that encapsulate everyday wisdom and reflect societal values. The way food is conceptualized and represented in language can reveal a great deal about national identity, lifestyle, climate, religion, and historical development.

The English language, rooted in Western cultural paradigms, often uses food metaphors associated with individualism, practicality, and humor. Sayings

such as "the proof of the pudding is in the eating" or "too many cooks spoil the broth" reflect a pragmatic and results-oriented worldview. In contrast, Uzbek proverbs, rooted in Eastern traditions and agrarian lifestyles, often emphasize community, hospitality, and spiritual values. Expressions like "Non topgan yerda o'lim top" (Die where you find bread) or "Choy ichilmagan uy – g'amgin uy" (A house without tea is a sad house) show how deeply food is tied to emotion, morality, and social cohesion.

The aim of this study is to identify and analyze gastronomic phraseological units in English and Uzbek proverbs, categorize their thematic groups (e.g., bread, salt, meat, tea), and explore their figurative meanings. The analysis is grounded in the principles of comparative linguistics and cultural linguistics, combining semantic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic approaches. By examining both the literal and metaphorical layers of meaning in food-related proverbs, the study seeks to uncover deeper cross-cultural patterns and differences in conceptualization.

Understanding gastronomic phraseology through the lens of proverbs contributes to broader intercultural awareness and supports language learners, translators, and linguists in grasping not only the vocabulary but also the cultural subtext of each expression. This investigation aims to provide a systematic and meaningful comparison, highlighting how a universal human experience—eating—is expressed differently across languages and cultures.

Literature analysis and methods

The study of phraseology and paremiology (the study of proverbs) has long attracted the attention of linguists, anthropologists, and cultural researchers due to its deep connection with national consciousness, worldviews, and traditions. In both English and Uzbek linguistics, researchers have acknowledged the significance of gastronomic elements in idioms and proverbs as carriers of cultural meaning and emotional imagery. A review of existing literature highlights that food-related expressions are among the most stable and metaphorically rich units within a language's idiomatic system.

Scholars such as A.V. Kunin, W. Mieder, and G.L. Permyakov have contributed significantly to the theoretical foundations of phraseology and paremiology. Kunin classified phraseological units based on their semantic and structural features, emphasizing the cultural component in their interpretation. Mieder, known for his work on English proverbs, focused on their sociocultural functions and historical origins. In Uzbek linguistics, scholars like S. Mamarasulov and A. Madrahimov have explored national proverbs, pointing out the role of gastronomic terms such as "non" (bread), "choy" (tea), and "go'sht" (meat) in shaping cultural identity and everyday speech. From a methodological standpoint, this research employs a comparative and descriptive approach. It is based on both qualitative and quantitative content analysis of selected proverbs and sayings in English and Uzbek that include gastronomic elements. The primary sources include widely recognized collections of proverbs in both

languages, including bilingual dictionaries, folkloric anthologies, and academic databases.

The first step involved compiling a corpus of 100–120 gastronomic proverbs in each language, selected based on frequency of use, clarity of metaphor, and cultural significance. These were then grouped into thematic categories such as:

- **Staple foods** (e.g., bread, salt, rice),
- **Meat and dairy** (e.g., meat, butter, milk),
- **Beverages** (e.g., tea, wine),
- **Cooking processes** (e.g., boiling, frying),
- **Utensils and meals** (e.g., pot, table).

Each proverb was analyzed for its literal meaning, figurative meaning, cultural connotations, and pragmatic function. Particular attention was paid to the metaphorical extensions of food items—for instance, how "bread" symbolizes life and sustenance in Uzbek proverbs, while in English, it may also denote money or livelihood (e.g., "breadwinner").

Additionally, the study applied the theory of conceptual metaphor by Lakoff and Johnson to trace how physical experiences with food translate into abstract thinking in language. For example, heat in cooking is often associated with emotional states in both languages (e.g., "boiling with anger" in English or "qaynagan yurak" in Uzbek). To ensure cross-cultural validity, interviews were conducted with native speakers and linguists from both cultures to assess how these proverbs are understood and used in modern contexts. This also helped identify cases where literal translations would fail to convey the intended meaning due to cultural specificity. Finally, contrastive analysis was used to determine whether similar gastronomic metaphors exist in both languages (universal metaphors) or are unique to one cultural context (culture-bound metaphors). This allowed the identification of overlapping semantic fields, as well as unique cultural expressions rooted in the dietary habits, religious customs, and historical conditions of each society. In summary, the study combines theoretical insights from phraseology, cognitive linguistics, and cultural studies with empirical analysis, offering a multidimensional comparison of how food functions as a metaphorical and symbolic resource in English and Uzbek proverbial language.

Results

The comparative analysis of gastronomic proverbs and sayings in English and Uzbek languages has revealed both universal and culturally specific features in the use of food-related phraseology. The findings demonstrate that while many food metaphors are shared across cultures due to common human experiences, the specific symbolic meanings, frequency of use, and cultural connotations often vary significantly between the two languages.

One key result is the high frequency and symbolic importance of **bread** in Uzbek proverbs. Bread ("non") appears in more than 30% of the analyzed Uzbek

proverbs, symbolizing life, honor, and sustenance. For example, the proverb “*Non topgan yerda o‘lim top*” (Die where you find bread) emphasizes the sacredness of food and gratitude toward the provider. In English, bread also appears symbolically, often associated with livelihood, as in “*He is the breadwinner*” or “*Know which side your bread is buttered on*”, but with a more economic than spiritual emphasis. Another result highlights **tea** as a culturally rich and emotionally loaded concept in Uzbek phraseology. Expressions like “*Choy ichilmagan uy – g‘amgin uy*” (A house without tea is a sad house) reflect the importance of hospitality and emotional warmth. In English, however, tea-related sayings like “*Not my cup of tea*” are more idiomatic and used to express personal preference, showing a pragmatic rather than cultural role.

Meat and fat in Uzbek proverbs often connote wealth or prosperity (e.g., “*Go‘sh tga go‘sh tga qo‘shilsa, suvi chiqadi*” – If meat is added to meat, it becomes juicy), reflecting traditional values surrounding abundance. In contrast, English proverbs using meat—such as “*There’s no use crying over spilt milk*” or “*Too many cooks spoil the broth*”—tend to emphasize practicality and everyday wisdom.

The study also found differences in the **emotional and social functions** of food metaphors. Uzbek proverbs often relate to morality, spiritual values, and community, reflecting the collectivist orientation of Uzbek culture. English proverbs, on the other hand, tend to reflect individualistic and utilitarian values, often with humor or irony.

In terms of metaphorical domains, both languages use **cooking processes** (boiling, frying, roasting) to express emotional states or character traits. For instance, “*Boil with anger*” (English) and “*Qaynagan yurak*” (boiling heart, Uzbek) both convey strong emotion. This supports the idea of shared conceptual metaphors rooted in physical experience.

Furthermore, **contrastive analysis** revealed that certain gastronomic items, such as **salt**, carry moral and religious significance in Uzbek culture (e.g., “*Tuz totgan joyda xiyonat qilma*” – Do not betray where you’ve tasted salt), while in English salt appears mostly in humorous or practical sayings (e.g., “*Take it with a grain of salt*”).

Finally, the research revealed that some **culture-bound proverbs** have no equivalent in the other language, requiring explanation or adaptation in translation. For example, Uzbek sayings involving traditional dishes or customs (e.g., “*Palov pishmay, to‘y bo‘lmas*” – No wedding without plov) have no direct English counterparts but convey important cultural values about celebration and community.

Overall, the results confirm that gastronomic phraseology serves as a mirror of cultural identity and worldview. Despite some universal conceptual patterns, the unique sociocultural background of each language shapes the metaphorical meaning and usage of food in proverbs. This underlines the

importance of cultural competence and contextual understanding in interpreting and translating such expressions.

Discussion

The comparative analysis of gastronomic proverbs and sayings in English and Uzbek highlights how deeply language is intertwined with cultural perception, social norms, and collective memory. Food, as a universal human necessity and cultural constant, serves as a powerful metaphorical tool in both languages, but its symbolic meaning, pragmatic use, and cultural weight vary significantly due to historical, religious, and social differences.

One of the most striking observations is the **central symbolic role of bread in Uzbek proverbs**, which often goes beyond nutritional value to represent sacredness, life, and spiritual morality. This emphasis reflects the agrarian roots and Islamic cultural values of Uzbek society, where food—particularly bread—is considered a divine blessing. The moral implications found in expressions like “*Non topgan yerda o‘lim top*” reinforce the ideas of loyalty, gratitude, and spiritual connectedness. In contrast, **English proverbs involving bread** tend to highlight material and economic aspects, as seen in phrases like “*Bread and butter job*” or “*He is the breadwinner*,” which are pragmatically oriented toward livelihood and responsibility.

Another important point of discussion concerns the **emotional versus functional roles of food metaphors**. In Uzbek, expressions such as “*Choy ichilmagan uy – g‘amgin uy*” symbolize hospitality, unity, and emotional warmth—values deeply embedded in Uzbek culture. Tea in this context is not just a beverage, but a social ritual. In English, however, tea functions more abstractly or idiomatically, as in “*Not my cup of tea*” (meaning personal dislike), which shows a shift from shared cultural symbolism to subjective evaluation. Moreover, the **use of food to reflect character and social behavior** is common to both languages, yet the way it is expressed differs. English proverbs often use food to deliver moral lessons with humor or irony—“*Too many cooks spoil the broth*,” for example, emphasizes the consequences of poor cooperation. Uzbek proverbs, on the other hand, tend to integrate such morals with notions of respect and tradition—“*Mehmon otangdan ulug‘*” (A guest is greater than your father)—which includes food as a central theme of hospitality and moral duty.

The discussion also reveals **common conceptual metaphors** shared across languages, such as associating **cooking with emotions**, **spices with character traits**, or **eating with human relationships**. For instance, both languages use cooking-related metaphors to convey emotional states—“*Boiling with anger*” in English and “*Qaynagan yurak*” in Uzbek are almost conceptually identical. This supports Lakoff and Johnson’s theory that metaphor arises from embodied experience, suggesting that some metaphorical uses of food are universal.

However, the study also exposes **culture-specific phraseology** that may lose its meaning without cultural context. For example, the Uzbek expression “*Palovsiz to‘y bo‘lmas*” (No wedding without plov) cannot be literally translated

without cultural explanation, as the dish “plov” holds a unique ceremonial and symbolic role in Uzbek society. English lacks such a direct culinary-cultural counterpart, which makes literal translation or cross-cultural understanding more complex.

In addition, the findings underscore the **pragmatic function of food phraseology**—proverbs are not just metaphorical expressions, but are used to advise, warn, instruct, or criticize behavior. In Uzbek, gastronomic proverbs often have a **didactic tone**, reflecting traditional authority and collectivism. In English, while still moralistic, many proverbs carry a **satirical or ironic flavor**, highlighting the cultural tendency toward individual interpretation and pragmatism.

Finally, the discussion points to the **importance of translation and intercultural communication** when dealing with gastronomic proverbs. Literal translation often fails to capture the pragmatic and cultural load of the original expression, leading to loss of meaning. This underlines the need for **culturally adaptive translation strategies**, especially in literature, education, and cross-cultural discourse.

In conclusion, the discussion affirms that gastronomic vocabulary and phraseology in proverbs serve as windows into the cultural soul of a nation. English and Uzbek proverbs, while sharing some metaphorical ground, differ in their depth of symbolism, emotional tone, and pragmatic usage. These differences highlight the importance of integrating linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic knowledge when analyzing, interpreting, or translating gastronomic expressions across languages.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of English and Uzbek proverbs reveals that gastronomic vocabulary serves not only as a linguistic tool but also as a reflection of national culture, traditions, and worldview. While both languages use food metaphors to express moral lessons, emotions, and social norms, their meanings often differ based on cultural context. Uzbek proverbs tend to emphasize hospitality, spirituality, and communal values, whereas English proverbs are more individualistic and pragmatic. The study highlights the importance of cultural and pragmatic competence in interpreting and translating food-related expressions, showing that gastronomic phraseology offers deep insights into the identity and mentality of each nation.

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