# COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FOOD-RELATED IDIOMS AS REFLECTIONS OF NATIONAL AND CULTURAL VALUES IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH

**Maftuna Turaeva**
Uzbekistan State World Languages University
E-mail: maftunaboboyorovna@gmail.com

Received: 03.11.2025
Revised: 04.11.2025
Accepted: 05.11.2025

**Keywords:**
Linguocultural code, national value, cultural values, semantic analysis, metaphor, hospitality, gratitude, loyalty, practicality, figurative language, cross-cultural comparison.

**Annotation.** This work aims to conduct a comparative study of Uzbek and English food-related idioms and explore how they reflect national and cultural values. The research highlights semantic, cultural, and symbolic meanings attached to food lexemes such as bread, salt, tea, milk, and honey in Uzbek, and bread, salt, apple, butter, and salt in English.

Language is an inseparable part of culture and serves as its mirror. Every nation encodes its worldview, traditions, and system of values in its linguistic units. Among these, idioms play a crucial role because they preserve the collective wisdom and cultural heritage of a nation.

Food-related idioms, in particular, reflect people's lifestyles, habits, and moral values. Since food is a universal concept that occupies a central position in human life, idioms containing food components reveal deep insights into cultural mentality. Wierzbicka fikricha, til birliklari, shu jumladan, frazeologizmlar faqat kommunikatsiya vositasi emas, balki xalq dunyoqarashi va qadriyatlarini saqlovchi vosita. (Wierzbicka, 1997)

In both Uzbek and English, food is more than nourishment—it is a symbol of hospitality, unity, and morality. Uzbek idioms such as:

- *Nonini tuya qilmoq* (to betray someone's trust)
- *Tuzini totmoq* (to be loyal or grateful to someone)
- *Asaldek shirin gap* (sweet and pleasant words)
- *Sutday tiniq niyat* (pure and honest intention)

express values like *loyalty, gratitude, honesty, and kindness.* Similarly, English idioms such as:

- *To take something with a grain of salt* (to be skeptical)
- *Bread and butter* (main source of income)

- *Apple of one's eye* (a beloved person)
- *Sell like hot cakes* (to be very popular or sell quickly)

reflect practicality, affection, and social behavior. Both languages use food imagery to conceptualize moral and emotional experiences, but the underlying cultural associations differ.

In Uzbek culture, *bread (non)* and *salt (tuz)* are sacred and symbolize honor, hospitality, and gratitude. Sharing bread is a moral act of friendship and trust. To "forget the bread and salt" (*nonini tuya qilmoq*) means to betray these moral bonds. Tea (*choy*) also plays a central cultural role as a medium of communication and respect, found in expressions like *choy ichgan joyini unutmaslik* (to remember someone's kindness).

In English culture, food idioms often arise from **daily life, trade, and practicality**. Bread represents livelihood (*one's bread and butter*), while *salt* symbolizes moderation and wisdom (*worth one's salt* — to be competent or valuable). These reflect a more individualistic, pragmatic worldview compared to the Uzbek focus on community and hospitality.

Frank Palmer (1996) emphasizes the close relationship between semantics and cultural context. The comparative analysis of Uzbek and English food-related idioms demonstrates a number of semantic parallels that reveal shared human experiences, as well as clear cultural distinctions that highlight different worldviews.Both languages conceptualize food as a symbol of life, sustenance, and moral value, yet they interpret these ideas through their own cultural lenses.

For instance, the Uzbek idiom *tuzini totmoq* (literally "to taste someone's salt") conveys a deep sense of loyalty and gratitude toward a person who has shown kindness or offered hospitality. Its closest English equivalent, *to be indebted to someone* or *to be grateful*, expresses a similar moral relationship, though without the strong sacred connotation that "salt" carries in Uzbek culture.

Another parallel can be seen between *non topib yeyish* in Uzbek and *bread and butter* in English. Both idioms symbolize one's means of livelihood and honest work. However, the Uzbek expression reflects the value of halollik (honesty) and mehnatsevarlik (hard work) as moral virtues, while the English idiom emphasizes the practical and economic aspect of earning a living.

Similarly, the Uzbek expression *asaldek shirin gap* ("sweet as honey words") and the English *sweet talk* both convey the notion of pleasant, charming speech. In both cultures, sweetness is associated with emotional warmth and kindness, yet in English the idiom can also carry a slightly manipulative nuance, showing a pragmatic use of charm.

Finally, while English uses *the apple of one's eye* to refer to a beloved or precious person, Uzbek culture conveys the same idea through more emotionally charged expressions like *jonidan aziz* ("dearer than life"), though it is not food-related. Nevertheless, both languages use sensory metaphors — taste, sweetness,

nourishment — to express affection and value, revealing the universal human tendency to link food imagery with emotional and ethical concepts.

In conclusion, the semantic parallels between Uzbek and English idioms show that food serves as a common metaphorical foundation for human experience, while the differences in imagery and emphasis reflect distinct national and cultural mentalities. Uzbek idioms tend to stress moral and spiritual dimensions such as loyalty, hospitality, and gratitude, whereas English idioms highlight practical, emotional, and individual aspects of life.

The comparative analysis of Uzbek and English food-related idioms reveals that both languages employ food as a powerful metaphorical tool for expressing national identity and moral principles. However, while Uzbek idioms primarily reflect communal values such as hospitality, gratitude, and spiritual purity, English idioms tend to express individuality, practicality, and emotional intimacy.

Thus, food imagery in idioms functions as a *linguocultural code* that bridges language and worldview. It not only conveys meaning but also transmits cultural memory, shaping how each nation perceives human relationships, morality, and daily life.

## USED LITERATURES:

1. Wierzbicka, A. (1997). *Understanding cultures through their key words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese*. Oxford University Press.

2. Palmer, F. R. (1996). *Semantics*. Cambridge University Press.

3. Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms (2003, Oxford University Press).

4. Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms (2010, Cambridge University Press).