



CULTURAL CODES AND EXPRESSIONS OF NATIONAL COLOUR IN UZBEK NATIONAL FOOD NAMES

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Abstract: This article examines the cultural codes and expressions of national colour represented in the names of Uzbek national dishes. Food names constitute an important component of a nation's linguistic and cultural heritage because they preserve information about historical experience, traditions, social relations, geographical environment, lifestyle, and national worldview. The study focuses on the linguistic and linguocultural characteristics of Uzbek food names and identifies the cultural meanings encoded in such lexical units as palov, sumalak, norin, somsa, manti, chuchvara, mastava, shurpa, and dimlama. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between the semantic structure of food names and traditional Uzbek concepts of hospitality, family, community, celebration, seasonal rituals, and social solidarity. The research employs descriptive, semantic, linguocultural, comparative, and contextual methods. The analysis demonstrates that Uzbek food names function not merely as designations of culinary products but also as cultural signs that transmit collective memory and national identity. Their cultural codes become especially evident when the names are considered together with the customs, rituals, methods of preparation, and social contexts associated with them. The study concludes that the systematic investigation of Uzbek food terminology contributes to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage and provides valuable material for comparative linguistics, translation studies, intercultural communication, and the study of national identity.

Keywords: Uzbek language, national food, food names, cultural code, national colour, linguoculture, cultural identity, culinary terminology.

Introduction. Language is one of the principal means through which a nation preserves and transmits its cultural experience. Every language contains lexical units that reflect the history, traditions, worldview, values, and everyday life of its speakers. Among such units, food names occupy a special position because food is closely connected with social organization, family relations, religious and seasonal traditions, hospitality, and historical memory. Consequently, national food names can be regarded as linguistic representations of a people's cultural identity.

Uzbek cuisine has developed over centuries under the influence of the



geographical environment, agricultural traditions, historical contacts, trade relations, and social practices of the Uzbek people. The names of traditional dishes therefore contain cultural information that extends beyond their direct nominative meanings. For example, palov is not simply the name of a rice-based dish; within Uzbek culture it is associated with hospitality, family gatherings, weddings, celebrations, communal meals, and important social events. Similarly, sumalak is closely associated with spring, the Navruz season, collective preparation, and social solidarity.

From a linguocultural perspective, such names may be interpreted as cultural signs. Their semantic content is enriched by cultural associations shared by members of the speech community. Thus, the study of food names makes it possible to investigate how national culture is encoded and represented in language.

The relevance of this research is determined by the growing importance of linguocultural studies in contemporary linguistics and by the necessity of documenting lexical units that embody national cultural values. The study of Uzbek food names is also important for intercultural communication because direct translation of culinary terms often fails to transmit their complete cultural meaning.

The purpose of this article is to identify the cultural codes and manifestations of national colour expressed in Uzbek national food names and to determine the relationship between these linguistic units and Uzbek traditions, customs, historical experience, and lifestyle.

The objectives of the study are:

- to identify the linguocultural characteristics of Uzbek national food names;
- to determine the principal cultural codes represented in culinary vocabulary;
- to analyse the relationship between food names and Uzbek traditions and social practices;
- to examine the expression of national colour through culinary terminology;
- to demonstrate the significance of food names in the preservation and transmission of cultural identity.

Materials and Methods. The research material consists of commonly used Uzbek names of traditional dishes and culinary products, including palov, sumalak, norin, somsa, manti, chuchvara, mastava, shurpa, dimlama, qozonkabob, halim, and patir. These lexical units were selected because they possess not only nominative meanings but also culturally significant associations.



The study applies several complementary research methods. The descriptive method is used to characterize the structural and semantic features of Uzbek food names. The semantic method makes it possible to identify the meanings and semantic components associated with particular culinary terms. The linguocultural method is employed to reveal cultural concepts, values, traditions, and historical information encoded in food names. The contextual method is used to examine how food names function in descriptions of celebrations, family events, hospitality, and everyday communication. A comparative approach is also relevant for determining how culturally specific Uzbek food names may differ from their approximate equivalents in English.

The concept of a cultural code is understood here as a system of culturally significant meanings through which members of a particular community interpret objects, actions, traditions, and social relations. In this sense, food names represent elements of the culinary-cultural code. The concept of national colour refers to the linguistic expression of features that make a cultural phenomenon recognizable as belonging to a particular national tradition.

Results. Food names as cultural signs The analysis shows that Uzbek food names can be divided into several culturally significant groups according to the information they encode.

The first group consists of names associated with social and communal practices. Palov, norin, and sumalak are particularly important in this respect. These dishes are traditionally connected with collective meals and social gatherings. Their cultural significance is therefore determined not only by ingredients or cooking methods but also by the circumstances in which they are prepared and consumed.

The second group includes names connected with seasonal and ritual culture. Sumalak is a prominent example. Its preparation is traditionally associated with the arrival of spring and Navruz celebrations. The dish consequently symbolizes renewal, abundance, hope, and community participation. The name thus activates a broad cultural context that cannot be completely conveyed through a dictionary translation such as “a traditional wheat-sprout dish.”

The third group contains food names reflecting family and hospitality values. Palov has particularly strong associations with welcoming guests and celebrating important life events. In Uzbek cultural consciousness, offering food to a guest is an expression of respect and generosity. Therefore, the culinary term becomes connected with the cultural concept of mehmondo‘stlik (hospitality).

The fourth group includes names that preserve information about traditional cooking practices and material culture. Terms such as qozonkabob



and dimlama evoke traditional cooking techniques and utensils. The word qozon (“cauldron”) itself has significant cultural associations because the qozon has historically been an important element of Uzbek household and communal cooking culture.

Cultural code of hospitality. Hospitality is one of the most visible cultural codes represented in Uzbek culinary vocabulary. Uzbek traditional meals are frequently associated with the reception of guests and the strengthening of social relationships.

Palov provides a particularly clear example. In English it can be rendered approximately as “pilaf” or “rice pilaf,” but such translations do not fully communicate its Uzbek cultural associations. Within Uzbek society, palov may symbolize generosity, respect for guests, celebration, and communal solidarity.

The cultural meaning of palov becomes particularly apparent in phrases referring to preparing or serving the dish for guests, family members, or participants in ceremonies. Thus, the lexical item operates on two levels: the first is its direct culinary meaning, while the second is its culturally determined associative meaning.

The same phenomenon can be observed in the term patir. Although it denotes a type of traditional bread, bread itself possesses a broader symbolic meaning in Uzbek culture. Bread is associated with abundance, respect, household prosperity, and hospitality. Consequently, the name of the food product participates in a wider cultural code of nourishment and respect.

Cultural code of family and community. Many Uzbek food names are closely related to collective preparation and consumption. This characteristic reflects the importance of family and community relationships in traditional Uzbek society.

Norin is an example of a dish whose preparation and consumption can be connected with family gatherings and hospitality. Manti and chuchvara also represent food traditions in which preparation may involve several members of a household. The preparation of such dishes creates opportunities for cooperation and intergenerational transmission of culinary knowledge.

This demonstrates that food names may encode not only the final product but also a particular social practice. When an Uzbek speaker hears the name manti or chuchvara, the term can evoke images of home cooking, family participation, hospitality, and traditional culinary skills.

Seasonal and ritual cultural codes - Seasonality represents another important cultural dimension of Uzbek food terminology. The strongest example is sumalak. Its cultural significance is inseparable from spring and Navruz traditions. Traditionally, the preparation of sumalak involves collective participation, particularly in communal settings. Therefore, the term is



associated with such concepts as spring, renewal, fertility, prosperity, friendship, and unity.

The cultural semantics of sumalak illustrates an important characteristic of national food names: a single lexical unit may function as a condensed representation of a complex cultural scenario. The name refers not merely to a particular dish but to a network of cultural associations involving a season, celebration, social gathering, ritual practice, and collective emotional experience.

Geographical and environmental cultural codes – Uzbek culinary vocabulary also reflects the relationship between people and their geographical environment. The development of traditional Uzbek cuisine has been influenced by agriculture, livestock breeding, local climate, and the availability of particular food resources.

Dishes based on rice, wheat, meat, vegetables, dairy products, and legumes reflect the agricultural and pastoral foundations of traditional life. Consequently, names such as palov, shurpa, and qozonkabob can be considered elements of a culinary lexicon shaped by the material environment.

The use of qozon in qozonkabob is particularly meaningful. It refers to a traditional cooking vessel and simultaneously points to a specific cooking technology. Therefore, the name combines the culinary product with an element of material culture.

Historical memory in food names – food vocabulary can also preserve traces of historical and cultural interaction. Uzbek cuisine has developed in a region characterized by long-standing contacts among different peoples and cultures. Trade routes, migrations, political relations, and cultural exchanges contributed to the development and diversification of culinary traditions.

The lexical composition of Uzbek culinary terminology therefore reflects processes of cultural interaction. However, borrowed or historically shared culinary elements can acquire distinctive meanings within Uzbek cultural space. Once integrated into everyday practice, a culinary term may become an important marker of local and national identity.

This observation demonstrates that national colour does not necessarily depend on the purely indigenous origin of a word. A food name may acquire national cultural significance through the way it functions within a particular community and cultural tradition.

Discussion. The findings indicate that Uzbek national food names represent a multidimensional linguistic and cultural phenomenon. Their significance can be explained through the interaction of several levels of meaning. At the lexical-semantic level, a food name identifies a particular dish or culinary product. At the cultural level, however, the same name may evoke a



set of values, traditions, social relations, historical experiences, and behavioural norms. For example, the lexical meaning of palov refers to a particular type of cooked rice dish. Its cultural meaning may include hospitality, celebration, respect, generosity, family unity, and communal interaction. Similarly, sumalak denotes a traditional food but simultaneously represents spring renewal, Navruz, collective work, and social solidarity.

This distinction is particularly important in translation. A translator who renders sumalak simply as “sweet wheat dish” may communicate its material characteristics but lose its cultural associations. Likewise, translating palov only as “pilaf” may identify the dish but fail to communicate its role in Uzbek social life. Therefore, culturally marked culinary terms often require descriptive translation, contextual explanation, transliteration, or a combination of these strategies.

- The concept of national colour is especially relevant here. Uzbek food names create national colour through several mechanisms:
 - references to traditional ingredients;
 - references to traditional cooking utensils and techniques;
 - associations with national celebrations;
 - links with hospitality and family traditions;
 - connection with seasonal rituals;
 - representation of communal practices;
 - preservation of historical and regional experience.

The results further demonstrate that food terminology can be regarded as a component of intangible cultural heritage. Culinary knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation, and linguistic units play an important role in this transmission. The name of a dish often functions as a verbal container of cultural memory.

From the perspective of intercultural communication, Uzbek food names are also important because they provide foreign learners and visitors with access to Uzbek cultural values. Understanding the cultural semantics of palov, sumalak, norin, or patir can contribute to a deeper understanding of Uzbek society than learning the lexical definitions of these words alone.

Conclusion. Uzbek national food names constitute an important part of the linguistic representation of national culture. The analysis demonstrates that these names encode cultural information related to hospitality, family, community, seasonal celebrations, traditional cooking practices, material culture, historical memory, and geographical environment.

The cultural code expressed through Uzbek culinary terminology is particularly visible in food names such as palov, sumalak, norin, manti, chuchvara, patir, and qozonkabob. These lexical units have meanings that



extend beyond the designation of food. They function as cultural signs and preserve information about the traditional worldview and lifestyle of the Uzbek people.

The study also confirms that national colour is created through the interaction of linguistic form, cultural context, social practice, and collective memory. Therefore, the interpretation and translation of Uzbek food names should take into account not only their denotative meanings but also their culturally specific connotations.

In conclusion, the study of Uzbek national food names from a linguocultural perspective is significant for Uzbek linguistics, comparative linguistics, translation studies, intercultural communication, and cultural heritage research. Further research may focus on a comparative analysis of Uzbek and English food names, the representation of culinary concepts in phraseology, and the transformation of traditional food terminology in contemporary media and tourism discourse.

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