



## LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF UZBEK SWEETS NAMES

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**Abstract:** The names of sweets represent an important part of the lexical system of a language, reflecting not only linguistic structures but also the cultural traditions, history, and national identity of a society. Their lexical and semantic features are shaped by various factors, including ingredients, methods of preparation, appearance, taste, geographical origin, and historical development. Many sweet names carry both literal and figurative meanings, revealing semantic diversity and cultural symbolism. The study of these names provides valuable insights into word formation, semantic classification, lexical meaning, and the relationship between language and culture. Furthermore, analyzing the lexical and semantic characteristics of sweet names contributes to a better understanding of food terminology and highlights the role of traditional confectionery vocabulary in preserving the linguistic and cultural heritage of a nation.

**Keywords:** Uzbek national sweets, lexical features, semantic features, semantic classification.

**Introduction.** The study of the lexical and semantic features of sweet names focuses on the linguistic characteristics, meanings, and classifications of the names given to confectionery products. Sweet names are an important part of food terminology because they reflect not only the physical characteristics of sweets but also the cultural traditions, historical development, and social values of a nation. From a lexical perspective, these names demonstrate different patterns of word formation, including simple, compound, and derived forms. Semantically, they often express information about ingredients, taste, color, shape, preparation methods, or geographical origin. In addition, many traditional sweet names carry symbolic and cultural meanings that have been preserved through generations. Therefore, the analysis of their lexical and semantic features contributes to a deeper understanding of language development, vocabulary enrichment, and the close relationship between language, culture, and national identity. This study aims to investigate the lexical structure and semantic characteristics of sweet names and to highlight their significance in linguistic and cultural research.

**Uzbek national sweets.** Among the wide variety of traditional Uzbek sweets, halva, navat, parvarda, and nishalda are considered some of the most



well-known and culturally significant confectionery products. Each of these sweets has unique ingredients, preparation methods, and cultural importance, making them valuable elements of Uzbekistan's culinary heritage.

Halva is one of the oldest and most widely consumed traditional desserts in Uzbekistan. It is commonly prepared from ground sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, or various types of nuts combined with sugar. Depending on regional traditions, additional ingredients such as honey, flour, vegetable oil, or egg whites may also be included. Although modern production methods are available, many artisans in different regions still prepare halva by hand using recipes that have been preserved for generations. These traditional techniques give the dessert a distinctive texture and rich flavor, while some aspects of its preparation remain closely guarded family secrets.

Another famous Uzbek sweet is navat, a natural crystallized sugar traditionally served with tea. Unlike ordinary refined sugar, navat is produced by slowly crystallizing concentrated sugar syrup or grape syrup around stretched cotton threads. During the crystallization process, natural spices may be added to improve its aroma and taste. The finished crystals range in color from light golden to deep amber. Besides being appreciated as a sweetener, navat has long been valued in Uzbek folk medicine. It is believed to relieve sore throats, reduce coughing, strengthen the immune system, and provide energy, particularly during cold weather. For this reason, it is often consumed together with green tea.

Parvarda is another popular Uzbek confection made mainly from sugar, flour, and lemon juice. It is recognized by its small pillow-like shape and white flour coating, which prevents the candies from sticking together. The preparation requires careful heating and repeated stretching of the sugar mass before it is cut into pieces. In some regions, natural herbs or spices are added to create distinctive flavors and aromas. Although its ingredients are simple, producing parvarda requires considerable skill and patience.

A traditional seasonal dessert known as nishalda is especially associated with the celebration of Navruz. This soft, airy sweet is prepared by combining whipped egg whites with sugar syrup and herbal extracts, particularly licorice root. The final product has a light, creamy texture similar to thick foam. During the Navruz holiday, nishalda is widely sold in local markets, where experienced confectioners prepare it using large traditional containers. In addition to its pleasant taste, nishalda is valued for its natural ingredients and is considered both nutritious and beneficial to health.

**Lexical Features.** The lexical characteristics of Uzbek national sweet names demonstrate the close relationship between language, culture, and history. The terminology used to identify traditional sweets reflects centuries of



culinary traditions, regional customs, and the importance of hospitality in Uzbek society. Most sweet names are closely connected with their ingredients, methods of preparation, appearance, texture, or cultural significance.

One of the notable lexical features is the influence of Persian, Arabic, and Old Turkic languages. Many traditional sweet names originated from these languages and have become an integral part of the Uzbek vocabulary. For example, the name *pashmak* is derived from the Persian word meaning wool, referring to its light, soft, and thread-like texture. Likewise, *nishalda* is associated with a whipped, foamy consistency that reflects its unique preparation process.

From a morphological perspective, Uzbek sweet names may take the plural suffix *-lar* when referring to different varieties or when emphasizing abundance. Forms such as *halvalar*, *navatlar*, and *parvardalar* are commonly found in literary works and everyday speech, illustrating the richness of traditional desserts and the generous hospitality for which Uzbek culture is well known.

Another important semantic feature is the figurative use of sweet names in daily communication. Words such as *navat*, *shakar* (sugar), and *bodom* (almond) are often used as affectionate expressions to address family members, children, or loved ones. This metaphorical usage reflects kindness, warmth, and emotional closeness, demonstrating that sweet-related vocabulary carries not only literal meanings but also important cultural and emotional values. Therefore, the lexical and semantic analysis of Uzbek sweet names provides valuable insights into the interaction between language, national traditions, and cultural identity.

**Semantic Features.** The semantic characteristics of Uzbek sweet names reveal a wide range of literal and figurative meanings that reflect both linguistic and cultural values. At the literal level, these names convey information about the main ingredients, flavor, texture, color, shape, or preparation techniques of traditional confectionery products. For instance, certain names emphasize sweetness, softness, or the crystalline appearance of the sweet, allowing speakers to identify its distinctive qualities. Beyond their direct meanings, many sweet names acquire figurative and symbolic functions in everyday communication. Expressions such as *novvotim* (my rock sugar), *shakarim* (my sugar), and *asalim* (my honey) are widely used to express affection, tenderness, admiration, and emotional attachment rather than referring to food itself. In this context, sweetness functions as a semantic symbol of love, kindness, sincerity, purity, and warmth. These metaphorical meanings illustrate semantic extension, where the original lexical meaning develops into an emotional or symbolic one through frequent social use. Moreover, the positive connotations associated



with sweet names strengthen interpersonal relationships and reflect the cultural tendency to associate sweetness with happiness, care, and respect. Therefore, the semantic analysis of Uzbek sweet names demonstrates how lexical units can express both concrete meanings and abstract emotional concepts, highlighting the close interaction between language, meaning, and cultural values.

**Semantic classification.** The semantic classification of Uzbek sweet names is based on the symbolic meanings, cultural functions, and traditional values associated with different types of confectionery. These names not only identify particular sweets but also convey concepts related to hospitality, celebration, health, prosperity, and national identity. From a semantic perspective, Uzbek sweet names can be divided into several meaningful categories according to their ingredients, cultural significance, and social functions.

Crystallized Sugar Sweets (Navat). This category includes sweets made through the natural crystallization of sugar syrup. Navat is one of the best-known traditional Uzbek sweets and serves as a symbol of generosity, respect, and hospitality. It is traditionally offered with tea to welcome guests and is widely associated with positive meanings such as purity, vitality, and well-being. In addition to its culinary role, navat has semantic associations with traditional healing practices and is often regarded as a symbol of comfort and care.

Caramel and Handcrafted Sugar Sweets (Parvarda and Pashmak). Traditional sweets such as parvarda and pashmak represent another semantic group. Their names are closely connected with their texture, appearance, and methods of preparation. Semantically, these sweets symbolize delicacy, elegance, celebration, and skilled craftsmanship. Because they require careful manual production, they are also associated with patience, artistic skill, and festive traditions.

Nut-Based Traditional Confectionery (Halva and Kozinaki). Sweets prepared from nuts, seeds, honey, or sugar belong to this category. Their semantic meanings are linked to abundance, strength, nourishment, and prosperity. Since these ingredients have long been important in Uzbek agriculture and daily life, the names of such sweets also evoke ideas of natural richness, family well-being, and traditional food culture.

Ritual and Seasonal Sweet Dishes (Sumalak). Unlike ordinary desserts, sumalak has a strong symbolic meaning within Uzbek culture. Prepared during the celebration of Navruz, it represents renewal, fertility, unity, and the arrival of spring. The collective process of cooking sumalak strengthens social relationships and reflects cooperation, solidarity, and shared cultural identity.



Consequently, its semantic value extends far beyond its literal meaning as a sweet dish.

**Conclusion.** The analysis of the lexical and semantic features of Uzbek sweet names demonstrates that these lexical units represent much more than the names of traditional confectionery. They reflect the linguistic richness, historical development, and cultural identity of the Uzbek people. From a lexical perspective, the names of sweets illustrate various patterns of word formation, borrowing, and vocabulary development influenced by Persian, Arabic, and Turkic languages. At the semantic level, they express both literal meanings related to ingredients, taste, texture, color, and preparation methods, as well as figurative meanings associated with hospitality, affection, prosperity, purity, and national traditions. Furthermore, the semantic classification of Uzbek sweet names highlights their symbolic roles in everyday life, festive celebrations, and social communication. Therefore, the study of these lexical units contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and national heritage. Future research may further explore the comparative lexical and semantic features of traditional sweet names across different languages and cultures, contributing to the broader field of linguistics and intercultural studies.

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