

LINGUOCULTURAL STUDY OF THE HYPERNYM “FOOD” AND ITS HYPONYMS IN THE ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Abstract: This article explores the linguocultural significance of the hypernym "food" and its hyponyms in English and Uzbek, highlighting the deep connections between language, culture, and culinary traditions. It examines the evolution of food terminology, regional dialects, and the impact of globalization on culinary vocabulary. Additionally, the study delves into how food-related terms and idioms reflect societal values and identities, offering insights into the ways cultures understand and relate to food. Through comparative analysis, it uncovers the rich diversity and cultural importance embedded in food language.

Keywords: Linguocultural study, hypernym, hyponym, food, comparative analysis, cultural identity, food idioms.

Introduction The words we use to describe food go beyond mere labels; they encapsulate culinary traditions, agricultural practices, and the social fabric of a culture. This is especially true when we examine the linguistic structures that categorize food items into hypernyms and their more specific counterparts, hyponyms. This article delves into the linguocultural dimensions of the hypernym "food" and its associated hyponyms in English and Uzbek languages, revealing the intricate relationship between language, culture, and cuisine.

Defining Hypernyms and Hyponyms

Hyponymy is a concept in linguistics, semantics, general semantics, and ontologies that illustrates the connection between a general term (hypernym) and a particular example or subset of it (hyponym). The term "hyponymy" originally comes from the Greek words "*hypo*" and "*onoma*", which mean "*below*" and "*name*".⁵ In other words, a hypernym is a word with a broad meaning that encompasses more specific words, known as hyponyms. For instance, "*food*" is a hypernym that includes hyponyms like "*bread*", "*cheese*", and "*fruit*" in its category.

Concepts or terms that are hyponyms of the same hypernym at the same level, semantic sisters, are called cohyponyms. For example, "*apple*", "*banana*" and "*peach*" are co-hyponyms of the hypernym "*fruit*".⁶ In simpler terms, hyponymy is like a family tree of words where some words are broad parents (hypernyms) and others are more specific children (hyponyms).

LITERARY REVIEW

Many researchers credit Wilhelm von Humboldt as the originator of the concept of linguistic culture. Linguistic studies now stand on Wilhelm von Humboldt's beliefs regarding the relationship between language and culture. Humboldt's insights go beyond mere linguistic analysis; he proposed a profound and dynamic connection between language, thought, and culture.

Moreover, A. Wierzbickaya, R.M. Keesing, R. Langacker, V. Maslova, V. Karasic, S. Vorcacev, V. Telia, V. Shaklein, F. Vorobev, J. Stepanov, E. Levchenko, V. Kononenko, and V. Zhayvoronok are the scientists who put out the most effort in linguoculturology. Uzbek linguistics are also conducting several studies in the field of linguoculturology. Particularly, the works of Ashurova D. U. and Galiyeva M. R. "Cultural linguistics", Mamontov A.S. "Language and culture: a comparative aspect of the study", A. Nurmonov "Linguoculturological direction in the Uzbek language", and

⁵ HYPONYM definition in American English | Collins English Dictionary. (2023, December 13). Collins Dictionaries. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/hyponym>

⁶ Safavi, K. (2000). An introduction to semantics [in Persian]. Tehran: Howzeye Honari. P 52.

N. Mahmudov “In search of perfect research ways of language” can be noted as examples of current field research.

At the same time, the topic of hyponymy hasn't always been front and center in the study of languages, but it's definitely caught the eye of quite a few researchers. This niche, which digs into how words with specific meanings relate to more general ones, has been a playground for linguists globally. They've taken a deep dive into how hyponymy works, both in terms of its meaning and its place in the language, pulling out some really insightful thoughts and ideas. We can see that the following linguists have studied the topic of hyponymy in their works: Yule, G. “The Study of Language”, Lyons, J. “Semantics”, Murphy, M. L. & Koskela, A. “Key terms in semantics”, Djumabaeva, J. Sh., Sabirova, N.K. “The Study Of Hyponymic Taxonomy In English Linguistics And The Lexical And Semantic Relations Of Hyponymy”, Safarova R. “O'zbek tilida giponomiya” and others.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is designed to explore the intricate relationship between language and culture through the lens of food-related vocabulary. This study adopts a comparative analysis approach, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods to delve into the nuances of how the concept of "Food" and its specific categories (hyponyms) are represented and understood differently in English and Uzbek.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

It is well known that English, with its rich history of invasions and global influence, has an extensive lexicon for food that reflects a wide range of cultural influences. The hypernym “food” encompasses a variety of hyponyms that denote different types of cuisine, preparation methods, and dietary preferences. For example, “*vegetarian*”, “*seafood*”, and “*desserts*” are all categories under the broad umbrella of food, illustrating the diverse culinary landscape of English-speaking countries. The hypernym “Food” in English contains a wide range of hyponyms, which reflects the English-speaking world's multiculturalism and global influence. The word “*tacos*”,

which is taken from Mexican cuisine, and “sushi”, which comes from Japan, represent a global mosaic of culinary customs and tastes. Such diversity shows the globalization of cuisines within English-speaking cultures and the inclusiveness of the language. It also demonstrates gastronomic curiosity. Furthermore, if we take the hyponym “tea”, it is beyond just a beverage, “tea” symbolizes a significant part of British culture, embodying a tradition of socializing and comfort. The term evokes images of afternoon tea, a practice that dates back to the 19th century, representing a moment of relaxation and class elegance.⁷ The term “comfort food” could be another example of hypernyms with cultural connotation. Comfort food is a term used to describe food that provides a nostalgic or sentimental value to someone. It is often associated with feelings of warmth, familiarity, and emotional well-being.⁸ Comfort food, as a linguistic concept, is primarily associated with the emotional and cultural significance of certain foods. These names can vary across cultures and regions, reflecting the local culinary traditions and preferences. For example, in English, terms like “macaroni and cheese”, “meat and potatoes”, or “chicken soup” are commonly used to describe comfort foods. Here it is important to mention the hypernym “Fast food”, which has become an inseparable part of everyday language. The term “Fast food” reflects the fast-paced lifestyle of many English-speaking countries. The term embodies the cultural shift towards more rapid, on-the-go lifestyles and has come to symbolize both the globalization of cuisine and the controversy over dietary health and sustainability. It is not just a label for a category of food but a term loaded with implications about health, culture, economy, and the pace of modern life.

In contrast, the Uzbek language reflects the gastronomic heritage of Central Asia in its categorization of food. The word for food in Uzbek is “*ovqat*”, serving as a hypernym for a variety of traditional dishes that are integral to Uzbek culture. Hyponyms under “*ovqat*” include “*osh*” (a rice dish with meat), “*shurva*” (soup), and

⁷ Orwell, G. (1946, January 12) A Nice Cup of Tea. Evening Standard.

⁸ Halley, C. (2020, December 1). A Brief History of Comfort Food. JSTOR Daily. <https://daily.jstor.org/a-brief-history-of-comfort-food/>

“*somsa*” (pastry filled with meat or vegetables), among others. These hyponyms not only represent the food itself but also signify the agricultural practices, historical influences, and social customs of the Uzbek people. Analyzing the hyponyms under “food” in both languages reveals deep cultural insights. Uzbek hyponyms for food often emphasize traditional dishes that have been passed down through generations, highlighting the importance of culinary heritage and the role of food in communal and familial settings. For example, the hyponym “*osh*” is not just a dish; it's a symbol of hospitality and community, often prepared for special occasions and gatherings. It has numerous meanings and cultural connotations according to the context:

1. Cooked hot meal: “*Ugra osh*”, “*xo'rda osh*”.
2. In general, any food: “*Oshing halol bo'lsa, ko'chada ich!*” (Proverb)
3. Name of the event and celebration: “*To'y oshi*”, “*qiz oshi*”, “*maslahat oshi*”, “*oshda ko'rinmadingiz?*”.

Another example is the word “*non*” (bread). “*Non*” (bread) holds a sacred place in Uzbek culture, representing sustenance and respect for food. The cultural significance of the hyponym “*non*” is reflected in various rites, rituals, and traditions associated with it. For example, there is a phraseological unit “*non sindirish*” which means to break bread, known as an engagement ritual in Uzbek culture. It involves breaking bread to confirm an agreement between parents upon a marriage between their children.⁹ Additionally, our study reveals that a significant number of idiomatic expressions involving the hyponym “*non*” typically symbolize sources of income or indicators of social standing. For instance: “*noni butun*” - having everything one needs for survival; “*noniga sherik bo'lmoq*” - sharing in another person's income; “*nonni moy bilan yemoq*” - living a comfortable and abundant life; “*non topmoq*” - making a living; “*noni yarimta*” - a reduction in income brought on by a business associate or rival; “*bitta noni ikkita bo'ldi*” - bettering one's situation through hard work;

⁹ Traditional Uzbek Breads. Uzbek cuisine. (n.d.). Central Asia Travel. <https://www.centralasia-travel.com/en/countries/uzbekistan/cuisine/non>

Moreover some food related hyponyms in both languages can be used to describe a person's characteristic features or appearance. For instance, the expression of embarrassment is conveyed through similar phrases in both English and Uzbek. Saying someone is “*red as a beet*” in English, and “*lavlagidek qizardi*” in Uzbek, both illustrate the concept of feeling ashamed. When someone feels embarrassed, their face often flushes red, visibly displaying their discomfort and sense of shame. Or the idioms “*as sweet as honey*” in English and “*tilidan bol tomadi*” in Uzbek both are used to describe someone that is exceptionally sweet, friendly, or kind. It compares a person's kindness to the natural sweetness of honey, which is widely regarded as a pleasant and enjoyable taste.

Another case in point is the use of the idioms “*milk-white*” and “*sutdek oppoq*” (white as milk), which vividly convey whiteness, drawing from the universally recognized color of milk to describe the fairness of human skin. Similarly, the color “*red*” is often depicted through references to apples or cherries. The English phrase “*as red as a cherry*” might not be translated directly into Uzbek with the same clarity due to cultural differences. Instead, expressions like “*olmadek qizil*” (red as an apple) or “*shirmoy kulchadek qizil*” (red as a little bread) resonate more within the Uzbek cultural context, showcasing how certain colors are associated with specific items in language to convey imagery.¹⁰

CONCLUSION

The article concludes that food, as explored through the hypernym “*food*” and its hyponyms in English and Uzbek, reflects deep cultural, historical, and social nuances. In English, the diversity of food-related terms showcases global influences and multiculturalism, while in Uzbek, the focus on traditional dishes highlights the importance of culinary heritage. This linguistic analysis emphasizes food's role in

¹⁰ Iskandarova, D. X. (2021). THE LINGUO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK IDIOMS WITH FOOD COMPONENTS. 3rd International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Ingenious Global Thoughts Hosted from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia May 31. Vol. 25 No. 1. P 142-144.

cultural identity and communication, demonstrating that food terms carry significant cultural connotations beyond their literal meanings.

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