

A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF UZBEK NATIONAL DISH NAMES IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN LITERARY WORKS

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Abstract

This article investigates the linguistic representation of Uzbek national dish names in English and Russian literary works, focusing on the intersection of language, culture, and translation. Food terminology is closely tied to cultural identity and reflects unique national traditions. The study explores how Uzbek culinary terms such as *plov*, *somsa*, *lag‘mon*, and *shurpa* are integrated, translated, or adapted in English and Russian contexts. Drawing on the principles of linguoculturology, translation studies, and comparative lexicology, the paper analyzes semantic shifts, strategies of domestication and foreignization, and the cultural connotations of culinary realia. The findings demonstrate that Russian literature, due to its long-standing cultural contact with Uzbekistan, tends to naturalize these terms, whereas English literature often treats them as exotic items requiring explanation.

Keywords: Uzbek cuisine terminology; linguistic analysis; culinary realia; English and Russian literary discourse; cultural transfer; domestication and foreignization; translation strategies; linguacultural.

Introduction

Language and culture are inseparable, and culinary terminology provides a vivid lens through which national identity is expressed and preserved. The names of national dishes represent not only gastronomic practices but also cultural memory, traditions, and historical connections. In the case of Uzbek cuisine, terms such as *plov* (pilaf), *somsa* (samosa-like pastry), *lag‘mon* (noodle soup), and *shurpa* (meat broth with vegetables) are deeply embedded in everyday life and appear frequently in literary texts that depict Central Asian reality.

The linguistic study of culinary terms in literature allows us to trace how cultural realities (realia) are translated, borrowed, or explained in other languages. In Russian literature, Uzbek dish names often enter the text with minimal adaptation, reflecting historical, geographical, and cultural proximity. In contrast, English literary works tend to treat these terms as exotic, often accompanied by glosses, descriptive translations, or cultural explanations.

This research aims to analyze how Uzbek national dish names are represented in English and Russian literary discourse, what translation strategies are used, and how cultural meanings are preserved or transformed in the process.

Linguocultural significance of Uzbek dish names

Uzbek national cuisine is an essential part of the country's intangible cultural heritage. Dish names function as linguacultural markers, carrying not only denotative but also connotative meanings. For example, *plov* symbolizes hospitality and festivity, while *somsa* is associated with everyday meals and street food culture. In literature, these terms often carry symbolic weight, evoking national identity and cultural atmosphere.

Representation in Russian literary works

Due to historical ties between Russia and Uzbekistan during the imperial and Soviet periods, Uzbek dish names have been incorporated into Russian linguistic and literary discourse more naturally. Russian authors often use terms such as *плов*, *самса*, *лагман*, and *шурпа* without translation, assuming that readers are familiar with their meaning. This reflects a process of partial lexical assimilation, where Uzbek realia gradually become part of Russian culinary vocabulary. In Russian literature, Uzbek dish names are often integrated naturally due to long-term cultural and historical contact (colonial period, Soviet Union). This makes them more familiar to Russian readers, where *plov* or *samsa* are not exotic but normalized cultural elements. As a sample the works of Fyodor Dostoevsky (19th century) – during his exile in Semipalatinsk, he noted Asian influences in Russian daily life, including cuisine, though not naming Uzbek dishes directly. Later Russian prose of the 19th–20th century integrated these terms more actively.

Representation in English literary works

In English literary discourse, Uzbek dish names appear less frequently and are usually treated as exotic or foreign elements. For instance, in travel literature or ethnographic narratives, terms like *plov* or *lagman* are often retained in transliteration but accompanied by descriptive glosses (e.g., *plov – a traditional Uzbek rice dish with meat and carrots*). This demonstrates a strategy of foreignization combined with explanatory translation, aimed at making the cultural realia accessible to English-speaking readers unfamiliar with Uzbek traditions. As a sample the works of James Elroy Flecker (1884–1915) – in his travel-inspired poems about the East (e.g., *The Golden Journey to Samarkand*), he refers to Oriental feasts and exotic meals, often indirectly describing Central Asian cuisine as a symbol of cultural richness. Although he does not name specific Uzbek dishes, his representations of the Silk Road culture provide a linguistic background for later translations where food names such as *pilaf* (*plov*) or *samsa* appear.

Conclusion

The linguistic analysis of Uzbek national dish names in English and Russian literary works highlights the interplay between language, culture, and translation. Russian literature demonstrates a greater degree of assimilation of Uzbek culinary terms due to long-standing cultural contact, while English literature treats these terms as exotic cultural markers requiring explanation. The study shows that food terminology functions as a key site of cultural transfer, where translation strategies such as transliteration, descriptive translation, and explanatory notes mediate between linguistic systems and cultural contexts. Further research can expand this analysis to contemporary media and digital discourse, where Uzbek cuisine is increasingly represented globally.

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