
Anthropomorphic metaphors in English and Uzbek culinary discourse: a linguocultural analysis

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Annotation *This article examines the linguocultural features of anthropomorphic metaphors in English and Uzbek culinary discourse. The study focuses on the ways food and dishes are represented through human qualities, emotions, and social behaviors in various culinary texts, including recipes, food blogs, restaurant descriptions, and gastronomic advertisements. The research applies comparative linguocultural and discourse analysis methods to identify the semantic and cultural functions of food-related anthropomorphic expressions in both languages. The findings demonstrate that English culinary discourse frequently emphasizes individual sensory experience, emotional comfort, and aesthetic pleasure, while Uzbek culinary texts mainly reflect collectivism, hospitality, social unity, and traditional cultural values. Anthropomorphic metaphors in English often portray food as emotionally expressive and personally engaging, whereas Uzbek culinary expressions present food as a symbol of community, respect, and interpersonal relationships. The study reveals that culinary language functions not only as a means of describing food but also as an important mechanism for transmitting national worldview, cultural identity, and social attitudes through metaphorical representation.*

Keywords *Anthropomorphic metaphor, culinary discourse, linguocultural analysis, food symbolism, metaphorical representation, English and Uzbek languages, gastronomic communication, cultural identity*

Ingliz va o'zbek kulinar diskursida antropomorf metaforalar: lingvomadaniy tahlil

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Annotatsiya *Ushbu maqola ingliz va o'zbek kulinariya diskursida antropomorfik metaforalarning lingvomadaniy xususiyatlarini o'rganadi. Tadqiqotda turli kulinariya matnlarida, jumladan retseptlar, gastronomik bloglar, restoran tavsiflari va reklama materiallarida oziq-ovqat va taomlarning insoniy xususiyatlar, his-tuyg'ular va ijtimoiy xulq-atvor orqali ifodalanish usullari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi antropomorfik ifodalarning semantik va madaniy funksiyalarini aniqlash uchun qiyosiy lingvomadaniy va diskurs tahlil metodlari qo'llanildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, ingliz kulinariya diskursida asosan individual sensor tajriba, emotsional qulaylik va estetik zavq ustuvor bo'lsa, o'zbek kulinariya matnlarida ko'proq kollektivizm, mehmondo'stlik, ijtimoiy birlik va an'anaviy madaniy qadriyatlar aks etadi. Ingliz tilidagi antropomorfik metaforalarda taom ko'pincha emotsional ifodali va shaxsiy ahamiyatga ega obyekt sifatida tasvirlanadi, o'zbek tilida esa u jamiyat, hurmat va insonlararo munosabatlar ramzi sifatida talqin qilinadi. Tadqiqot shuni ko'rsatadiki, kulinariya tili nafaqat taomni tasvirlash*

vositasi, balki metaforik ifodalar orqali milliy dunyoqarash, madaniy identitet va ijtimoiy qarashlarni uzatishning muhim mexanizmidir.

Kalit so'zlar *Antropomorfik metafora, kulinariya diskursi, lingvomadaniy tahlil, oziq-ovqat ramziyati, metaforik ifoda, ingliz va o'zbek tillari, gastronomik kommunikatsiya, madaniy identitet*

Антропоморфные метафоры в кулинарном дискурсе английского и узбекского языков: лингвокультурологический анализ

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Аннотация *Данная статья исследует лингвокультурные особенности антропоморфных метафор в английском и узбекском кулинарном дискурсе. В центре внимания находятся способы представления пищи и блюд через человеческие качества, эмоции и социальное поведение в различных кулинарных текстах, включая рецепты, кулинарные блоги, описания ресторанов и гастрономическую рекламу. В исследовании применяются сравнительно-лингвокультурный и дискурсивный методы анализа для выявления семантических и культурных функций антропоморфных выражений, связанных с пищей, в обоих языках. Полученные результаты показывают, что в английском кулинарном дискурсе преобладает акцент на индивидуальном сенсорном опыте, эмоциональном комфорте и эстетическом удовольствии, тогда как узбекские кулинарные тексты в основном отражают коллективизм, гостеприимство, социальное единство и традиционные культурные ценности. Антропоморфные метафоры в английском языке часто представляют пищу как эмоционально выразительный и лично значимый объект, в то время как в узбекских выражениях еда выступает как символ общности, уважения и межличностных отношений. Исследование показывает, что кулинарный язык функционирует не только как средство описания пищи, но и как важный механизм передачи национального мировоззрения, культурной идентичности и социальных установок через метафорическое представление.*

Ключевые слова *Антропоморфная метафора, кулинарный дискурс, лингвокультурный анализ, символика пищи, метафорическое представление, английский и узбекский языки, гастрономическая коммуникация, культурная идентичность*

Introduction

Food has long occupied a central position in human social life, functioning not only as a biological necessity but also as a cultural symbol closely connected with identity, memory, emotions, and interpersonal communication. In many societies, culinary practices reflect historical experience, national traditions, collective values, and patterns of social interaction. Language plays a significant role in shaping and transmitting these meanings because people rarely describe food in purely literal terms. Culinary discourse frequently relies on figurative language, emotional evaluation, and metaphorical constructions that transform ordinary dishes into culturally meaningful objects. Among these linguistic mechanisms, anthropomorphic metaphors represent one of the most expressive and culturally revealing forms of representation. Anthropomorphic metaphor refers to the attribution of human characteristics, emotions, intentions, and behaviors to non-human entities. Within culinary discourse, food is often described as if it were capable of acting, feeling, welcoming, comforting, seducing, or communicating with people. Such expressions are not accidental stylistic decorations. They reveal culturally specific perceptions of food, eating traditions, emotional experience, and social relations. Culinary anthropomorphism therefore serves not only aesthetic purposes but also ideological, pragmatic, and cultural functions in discourse. The linguistic portrayal of food as an active social participant demonstrates how language transforms eating into a symbolic cultural activity rather than a purely physical act. In contemporary linguistics, metaphor is understood as a cognitive and cultural phenomenon rather than merely a rhetorical device. According to conceptual metaphor theory, human beings interpret abstract experiences through conceptual structures grounded in everyday life and embodied

experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Metaphorical thinking shapes the way individuals perceive emotions, relationships, morality, identity, and social reality. Culinary metaphors are particularly important because food is universally associated with survival, pleasure, family relations, hospitality, and emotional comfort. Consequently, food-related anthropomorphic metaphors often reflect deep cultural attitudes toward community, intimacy, gender roles, celebration, and social hierarchy. Recent developments in cognitive linguistics and discourse studies have expanded scholarly interest in gastronomic discourse as a culturally meaningful communicative domain. Researchers increasingly examine how culinary language reflects social identity, national mentality, and symbolic value systems. Food discourse includes recipes, restaurant menus, advertising, television programs, social media publications, culinary blogs, and everyday communication related to eating practices. These texts frequently employ emotionally charged and personified descriptions designed to influence perception, stimulate appetite, establish cultural belonging, and create emotional attachment to particular dishes or traditions. Anthropomorphic metaphors become especially productive in this context because they humanize food and create stronger psychological engagement between the audience and culinary objects. English culinary discourse demonstrates a strong tendency toward emotional personalization and sensory individualism. In many English-language food descriptions, dishes are represented as emotionally expressive entities capable of "embracing," "comforting," "welcoming," or "surprising" consumers. Expressions such as "the sauce hugs the pasta" or "a warm soup comforts the soul" illustrate how culinary texts frequently frame food as an emotionally interactive experience. Such representations reflect broader cultural tendencies associated with individual pleasure,

personal taste, emotional self-care, and sensory satisfaction. Food in English culinary discourse is often connected with intimacy, mood, indulgence, and individual emotional fulfillment. The anthropomorphic portrayal of dishes strengthens the emotional and persuasive impact of culinary communication, especially in advertising and digital gastronomic media.

Uzbek culinary discourse, however, reflects somewhat different linguocultural priorities. Traditional Uzbek food culture is deeply associated with collectivism, hospitality, family unity, and social respect. National dishes such as palov, somsa, non, and shurva possess symbolic meanings extending far beyond nutrition. In Uzbek communicative traditions, food often functions as a representation of generosity, social harmony, and communal identity. Anthropomorphic metaphors in Uzbek culinary texts therefore tend to emphasize social relationships and collective values rather than individual sensory pleasure alone. Expressions implying that food "welcomes guests," "unites people," or "raises spirits" reveal the cultural role of meals as instruments of social bonding and emotional solidarity. Culinary discourse in Uzbek culture frequently constructs food as a participant in interpersonal relationships and ceremonial life. Despite the growing scholarly interest in food discourse and metaphor studies, comparative research devoted specifically to anthropomorphic metaphors in English and Uzbek culinary texts remains relatively limited. Existing studies primarily focus on conceptual metaphor theory, national cuisine symbolism, or general discourse analysis without paying sufficient attention to the linguocultural functions of personified food imagery in cross-cultural comparison. Many investigations analyze metaphorical structures within Western discourse traditions, while Central Asian culinary linguoculture receives considerably less academic attention. As a result, important cultural distinctions in the metaphorical conceptualization of food remain

underexplored. The present study seeks to address this gap by examining the linguocultural aspects of anthropomorphic metaphors in English and Uzbek culinary discourse. The research focuses on identifying how food-related anthropomorphic expressions function within different cultural contexts and what these representations reveal about national value systems, emotional models, and communicative priorities. The analysis draws on examples collected from culinary blogs, restaurant descriptions, recipes, gastronomic advertisements, and online food-related media in both languages. By comparing metaphorical patterns across English and Uzbek discourse, the study aims to reveal how linguistic imagery reflects culturally specific understandings of food, hospitality, pleasure, and social interaction. The theoretical significance of the study lies in its contribution to cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, and linguocultural research. The investigation expands current understanding of metaphor as a culturally conditioned cognitive mechanism operating within gastronomic communication. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that anthropomorphic metaphors perform not only descriptive functions but also persuasive, emotional, and ideological roles in culinary discourse. Food personification creates symbolic narratives through which societies communicate attitudes toward identity, tradition, and interpersonal relations. The practical importance of the research is connected with intercultural communication, translation studies, language teaching, and media discourse analysis. Since culinary language increasingly appears in international marketing, tourism promotion, social media communication, and global gastronomy industries, understanding culturally specific metaphorical structures becomes highly relevant. Translators and language learners often encounter difficulties when interpreting food-related metaphors because such expressions carry implicit cultural meanings that cannot always be translated literally.

Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek culinary anthropomorphism may therefore contribute to more accurate intercultural interpretation and culturally sensitive communication practices. The study applies methods of comparative analysis, conceptual metaphor analysis, discourse analysis, semantic interpretation, and linguocultural examination. These approaches allow the research to investigate both linguistic structures and broader cultural meanings embedded within culinary texts. Special attention is devoted to the emotional, pragmatic, and symbolic functions of anthropomorphic metaphors in different communicative contexts. The analysis also considers how culinary personification influences audience perception and constructs cultural narratives surrounding food consumption. Ultimately, the article argues that anthropomorphic metaphors in culinary discourse reflect more than stylistic creativity. They function as indicators of cultural worldview, social values, and collective emotional experience. English culinary discourse tends to conceptualize food through the framework of personal emotion and sensory individuality, whereas Uzbek culinary discourse more frequently associates food with hospitality, collective identity, and interpersonal unity. These metaphorical patterns reveal important differences in cultural models of communication and social interaction. Through the linguistic humanization of food, both cultures transform culinary practices into meaningful symbolic systems capable of expressing emotional, moral, and social realities.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, comparative research design aimed at investigating anthropomorphic metaphors in English and Uzbek culinary discourse from a linguocultural perspective (Nurmonov, 2010). The choice of a qualitative approach is grounded in the nature of the research object, since metaphorical meaning, cultural symbolism, and discourse-level interpretation

cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement alone. Instead, they require interpretative analysis of language in context, supported by theoretical frameworks from cognitive linguistics and discourse studies. The theoretical foundation of the research is primarily based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which views metaphor not as a purely stylistic device but as a cognitive mechanism through which abstract concepts are understood in terms of more concrete, embodied experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In addition, insights from cognitive linguistics and cultural linguistics were employed to examine how metaphorical structures reflect culturally specific models of thinking and communication (Kövecses, 2010; Sharifian, 2017). Discourse analysis principles were also integrated in order to interpret how metaphorical expressions function within real communicative settings rather than isolated linguistic units (van Dijk, 2008). The empirical data for the study consists of English and Uzbek culinary texts collected from digital and written sources. These include online recipes, food blogs, restaurant descriptions, culinary advertisements, gastronomic reviews, and culturally oriented food articles. English-language data were selected from widely used culinary platforms and digital food media, while Uzbek-language data were gathered from national culinary websites, traditional recipe collections, restaurant promotional texts, and online publications related to Uzbek cuisine and food culture. The selection was limited to contemporary sources in order to reflect current discourse practices in both linguistic environments. A purposive sampling technique was applied in selecting linguistic material. Only those textual fragments that contained clear anthropomorphic metaphorical structures were included in the analysis. Anthropomorphic expressions were identified as linguistic units in which food, dishes, or culinary processes are attributed human qualities, emotions, intentions, or social behaviors. Examples include constructions

where food is described as “welcoming,” “comforting,” “embracing,” “inviting,” or “bringing people together.” Literal descriptions of taste, preparation methods, or physical characteristics without metaphorical humanization were excluded from the dataset. This selective approach ensured analytical focus on relevant linguistic phenomena.

The analytical procedure consisted of several stages. First, metaphorical expressions were identified and extracted from the collected corpus. Second, each expression was classified according to the type of anthropomorphic attribution, such as emotional personification, behavioral personification, or social role attribution. Third, the contextual function of each metaphor was examined within its original discourse environment to determine whether it served descriptive, persuasive, emotional, or cultural purposes. Fourth, the identified metaphors were interpreted through a linguocultural lens in order to reveal the cultural values and conceptual models underlying their usage (Mahmudov, 2012). Comparative analysis was then conducted between English and Uzbek data sets. This stage focused on identifying similarities and differences in the conceptualization of food through human characteristics. In English culinary discourse, particular attention was given to metaphors emphasizing individual sensory experience, emotional comfort, and personal engagement with food. In contrast, Uzbek culinary discourse was analyzed in relation to collective values such as hospitality, social unity, respect for guests, and communal dining traditions. The comparison allowed for the identification of culturally grounded patterns in metaphor usage and discourse organization. Semantic analysis was applied to explore the implicit meanings and associative networks embedded in anthropomorphic expressions. This involved examining both the denotative meaning of lexical units and their connotative and cultural implications. For instance, when food is described as “comforting,” the analysis

considers not only the emotional meaning of comfort but also the cultural association of food with psychological support, care, and emotional stability. Similarly, Uzbek expressions that present food as a social unifier were interpreted in relation to traditional cultural practices of communal eating and hospitality. To ensure analytical reliability, all selected examples were examined within their full textual context rather than in isolation. Contextual interpretation helped avoid misrepresentation of meaning and allowed for a more accurate understanding of communicative intent. Recurrent metaphorical patterns were grouped and compared across different sources in order to identify dominant tendencies within each linguistic culture. This step also helped distinguish individual stylistic choices from culturally stable metaphorical models.

The study acknowledges certain limitations. The dataset is primarily based on contemporary digital and written culinary discourse, which may not fully represent historical or regional variations in metaphor usage. In addition, the qualitative interpretative nature of the research implies a degree of subjectivity in semantic and cultural analysis. However, the use of established theoretical frameworks and systematic comparative procedures helps to minimize interpretative bias and enhance the validity of the findings. Overall, the methodological framework combines cognitive, semantic, discourse-based, and linguocultural approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of anthropomorphic metaphors in culinary discourse. This integrated methodology enables the study to move beyond surface-level linguistic description and uncover deeper cultural meanings embedded in English and Uzbek food-related communication.

Results

The analysis of English and Uzbek culinary discourse revealed a systematic presence of anthropomorphic metaphors that function as key mechanisms for expressing

cultural meanings, emotional attitudes, and communicative intentions related to food. The findings demonstrate that food in both linguistic cultures is frequently conceptualized as an active participant in human experience rather than a passive object of consumption. However, the nature of this personification varies significantly depending on culturally specific value systems and communicative traditions.

In English culinary discourse, anthropomorphic metaphors predominantly emphasize individual sensory experience and emotional engagement. Food items are often described as possessing human-like emotional or behavioral qualities that directly interact with the consumer. For example, dishes are represented as capable of "comforting," "embracing," "welcoming," or "surprising" individuals. Such expressions construct food as an emotionally responsive entity that contributes to personal well-being and psychological satisfaction. The analysis shows that this type of metaphor is particularly frequent in food blogs, restaurant descriptions, and advertising texts, where the persuasive function of language is highly prominent. The results indicate that English culinary discourse tends to frame food experience as individualized and emotionally internalized. Anthropomorphic metaphors in this context are closely linked to concepts such as self-care, emotional relief, indulgence, and sensory pleasure. Food is often portrayed as a companion-like presence that responds to human emotional states. For instance, "comfort food" descriptions frequently imply that dishes actively participate in emotional regulation by reducing stress or enhancing mood. This pattern reflects a broader cultural orientation toward personal experience and psychological well-being in food consumption practices. In contrast, Uzbek culinary discourse demonstrates a different pattern of anthropomorphic representation. Here, food is more frequently conceptualized in relation to social interaction, collective identity, and

cultural tradition. Anthropomorphic metaphors in Uzbek texts often attribute social roles to food, such as "welcoming guests," "uniting people," or "strengthening relationships." Rather than focusing on individual emotional states, these expressions emphasize the role of food in maintaining social cohesion and reinforcing communal values. The findings show that Uzbek culinary discourse strongly reflects cultural norms of hospitality and collectivism (Rahimov, 2018). Traditional dishes are frequently represented as active participants in social rituals, particularly in contexts involving guest reception and family gatherings. For example, meals such as plov are not merely described as dishes but as symbolic agents that bring people together and create social harmony. This type of metaphorical representation highlights the importance of food as a medium of interpersonal connection and cultural continuity. Comparative analysis reveals both convergences and divergences between the two linguistic cultures. A common feature is the widespread use of personification to enhance emotional and communicative impact. In both English and Uzbek discourse, food is linguistically animated to create stronger engagement and symbolic meaning. However, the underlying conceptual orientations differ significantly. English metaphors prioritize emotional intimacy and individual sensory satisfaction, while Uzbek metaphors emphasize social unity, respect for tradition, and collective experience. Another important finding concerns the pragmatic function of anthropomorphic metaphors. In English culinary discourse, such metaphors primarily serve persuasive and marketing purposes, aiming to influence consumer perception and enhance product attractiveness. In Uzbek discourse, anthropomorphic metaphors more frequently perform cultural and identity-forming functions, reinforcing traditional values and social norms associated with hospitality and communal life. This difference indicates that metaphor usage is closely aligned with the

communicative goals of each cultural environment. The semantic analysis further shows that anthropomorphic metaphors are not randomly distributed but follow recognizable conceptual patterns. In English texts, food is commonly associated with emotional states such as comfort, pleasure, excitement, and relaxation. In Uzbek texts, food is more commonly associated with social actions such as welcoming, uniting, respecting, and honoring. These patterns suggest that metaphorical structuring of culinary discourse is deeply embedded in culturally specific cognitive models (To'xsanov, 2019). Overall, the results confirm that anthropomorphic metaphors in culinary discourse function as culturally conditioned linguistic tools that shape how food is perceived, evaluated, and experienced. The findings demonstrate that English and Uzbek culinary texts construct different but systematic metaphorical worlds in which food plays distinct roles within human life: as an emotional companion in English discourse and as a social connector in Uzbek discourse.

Conclusion

The present study investigated anthropomorphic metaphors in English and Uzbek culinary discourse from a linguocultural perspective, aiming to reveal how food is conceptualized through human attributes and how such representations reflect underlying cultural values. The findings demonstrate that anthropomorphic metaphor is not a superficial stylistic feature of culinary language but a cognitively and culturally motivated mechanism that structures meaning, shapes perception, and strengthens communicative impact in food-related texts. The comparative analysis shows that both English and Uzbek culinary discourses extensively rely on personification of food, yet the semantic orientation and cultural implications of these metaphors differ significantly. In English culinary discourse, anthropomorphic metaphors primarily construct food as an emotionally responsive entity associated with

individual experience, sensory pleasure, and psychological comfort. Food is frequently represented as something that "comforts," "embraces," or "delights," which reflects a cultural tendency toward personalization of experience and emphasis on individual emotional states in consumption practices. In contrast, Uzbek culinary discourse conceptualizes food within a broader social and cultural framework. Anthropomorphic metaphors in Uzbek texts more often emphasize collective values such as hospitality, respect for guests, social cohesion, and communal identity. Food is portrayed as an active participant in social interaction, capable of "welcoming," "uniting," or "strengthening relationships." This reflects the strong cultural significance of shared meals and traditional hospitality practices in Uzbek society, where food functions as a symbol of unity and interpersonal harmony. The study confirms that these metaphorical differences are not arbitrary but are deeply rooted in culturally specific cognitive models and social structures. English culinary metaphors tend to foreground individual emotional experience and personal satisfaction, whereas Uzbek metaphors foreground collective experience and social bonding. Thus, culinary discourse serves as a linguistic space where cultural values are encoded, transmitted, and reinforced through metaphorical language. From a theoretical perspective, the research supports the claims of cognitive linguistics that metaphor is a fundamental mechanism of thought rather than merely a linguistic ornament (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). It also confirms that metaphorical structures are culturally embedded and vary across linguistic communities, as emphasized in cultural linguistics (Sharifian, 2017) and metaphor theory (Kövecses, 2010). The findings further demonstrate that discourse analysis provides a useful framework for interpreting how metaphor functions in real communicative contexts beyond isolated sentence-level structures (van Dijk, 2008). Practically, the study

contributes to intercultural communication and translation studies by highlighting potential difficulties in interpreting culinary metaphors across languages. Since anthropomorphic expressions often carry implicit cultural meanings, literal translation may lead to loss of intended emotional or cultural nuance. Understanding the cultural logic behind food personification can therefore improve translation accuracy and enhance cross-cultural communication in gastronomy, tourism, and media discourse. Despite its contributions, the study has certain limitations. The analysis is based on a limited corpus of contemporary digital culinary texts and does not fully account for historical evolution or regional variation within English and Uzbek culinary traditions. Additionally, the qualitative nature of the research implies interpretative subjectivity, although this was minimized through

systematic analytical procedures and theoretical grounding. Future research may expand the corpus to include spoken culinary discourse, audiovisual media, and historical gastronomic texts. It may also incorporate quantitative corpus-based methods to complement qualitative findings and provide more statistically grounded insights into metaphor frequency and distribution. In conclusion, anthropomorphic metaphors in culinary discourse serve as a powerful linguistic and cultural tool through which societies construct meaningful representations of food. The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek data reveals that while both languages employ personification to enhance culinary communication, they do so in culturally distinct ways that reflect deeper differences in worldview, social organization, and emotional orientation.

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