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# Comparative Study of Regional Food Names in English and Uzbek

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**Abstract:** This article presents a comparative linguistic and cultural analysis of regional food names in English and Uzbek. Culinary terms carry not only linguistic meaning but also deep cultural and historical significance. The article explores the lexical structure, semantic features, and translation challenges of food-related terminology in both languages, emphasizing the role of culture in naming and understanding traditional dishes. The study highlights the need for culturally sensitive approaches when translating or interpreting culinary terms across languages.

**Keywords:** Regional cuisine, food names, translation, linguistic comparison, Uzbek language, English language, culinary culture.

**Introduction:** Language and culture are inextricably linked, and one of the most vivid expressions of this link is seen in the vocabulary of food. Each culture's cuisine reflects its environment, resources, traditions, and social practices. In this context, food names are not merely labels but encapsulate stories, values, and shared experiences. This study aims to explore the similarities and differences in the naming of regional dishes in English and Uzbek, focusing on semantic, morphological, and cultural aspects.

A comparative framework reveals not only linguistic distinctions but also deeper cultural narratives embedded within food lexicon.

**Etymological Origins** Many Uzbek food names, such as manti and lagman, derive from Chinese and Persian roots, reflecting Silk Road culinary exchange. In contrast, English dishes often reflect feudal or colonial influence, such as "Wellington" or "Tikka masala."

**Socio-cultural Representation** Uzbek dishes are often tied to communal events (e.g., weddings, Navruz). Their

names signal function and ritual. In English-speaking cultures, while some dishes do have ceremonial relevance, many food terms reflect class distinctions (e.g., "caviar" vs. "beans on toast").

**Morphosyntactic Patterns** English favors syntactic descriptions ("roasted lamb with rosemary"), whereas Uzbek leans toward lexical encapsulation (e.g., qovurma, dimlama), where the preparation method is fused into a single term.

**Semantic Transparency** Uzbek food names often require explanation to outsiders, while English names tend to be more semantically transparent to global audiences. For instance, "apple pie" is instantly recognizable, while sumalak might need cultural framing.

**Globalization Impact** English food terms have become globalized through mass media (e.g., "hamburger", "pizza"), whereas Uzbek dishes are slowly gaining recognition in diasporic communities and through culinary diplomacy. This unequal exposure shapes mutual understanding and familiarity with respective cuisines.

Linguistic Features of Food Names

**English Food Naming Patterns** English food terms often reflect ingredients (e.g., "beef stew"), cooking methods (e.g., "roast chicken"), or origins (e.g., "Yorkshire pudding"). Compound structures are common, and food names frequently include descriptive adjectives and nouns.

**Uzbek Food Naming Patterns** Uzbek food names often have cultural and historical roots, using Turkic, Persian,

and Arabic elements. Many names are single words (e.g., palov, somsa, shurva), with suffixes or affixes indicating cooking method or key ingredients.

Cultural Semantics of Food Names

Food names are often loaded with cultural meanings. For example:

- Palov is not just "rice pilaf" but a central dish in Uzbek culture, symbolizing hospitality and celebration.
- Norin is traditionally associated with horsemeat and ceremonial occasions.
- Somsa (similar to "samosa") has regional variations and is often sold as street food.

In contrast, English dishes like "fish and chips" or "Sunday roast" carry cultural connotations of comfort food and tradition, particularly in British English.

Translation Challenges

Many Uzbek food terms lack direct equivalents in English due to cultural specificity. Translators must choose between:

- Borrowing: using the original term (e.g., plov, lagman)
- Descriptive translation: explaining the dish (e.g., shurva as "meat and vegetable broth")
- Cultural substitution: comparing it to a similar well-known dish (e.g., somsa as "Uzbek samosa")

Each method has strengths and limitations, depending on the context and audience. Literal translation often fails to convey the cultural depth, while adaptation may distort the original meaning.

Comparative Examples

Uzbek Dish		Literal Translation	English Equivalent or Description
Palov	Pilaf		Rice cooked with meat and vegetables
Norin	N/A		Cold noodles with sliced horsemeat
Shurva	Broth soup		Hearty meat and vegetable soup
Somsa	Meat pastry		Uzbek-style savory pastry (like samosa)
Manti	Steamed dumplings		Large dumplings with meat filling

Understanding the linguistic and cultural context of food names contributes to broader fields such as anthropology, translation studies, and intercultural communication. Culinary terms act as markers of identity and tools for cultural preservation. The adaptation or loss of traditional food names in translation may reflect deeper sociolinguistic shifts, such as assimilation, globalization, or cultural

commodification.

Language educators and translators should be aware of the cultural baggage that food names carry. In classrooms and in international discourse, introducing authentic culinary terms with appropriate cultural framing can enhance cross-cultural understanding and respect.

## Conclusion

The comparative study of regional food names in English and Uzbek reveals both linguistic diversity and cultural richness. Accurate translation of culinary terms requires not just linguistic competence but also cultural awareness. As globalization increases cross-cultural communication, preserving the authenticity of traditional food names while making them accessible to broader audiences becomes a crucial task for linguists, translators, and educators.

Recognizing food names as cultural symbols fosters appreciation of heritage and diversity. Through careful comparative study, researchers can highlight the nuances that make each language and culinary tradition unique.

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