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## SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH FOOD IDIOMS

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**Abstract.** *This article examines the semantic characteristics of English food idioms and explains how their figurative meanings are formed through metaphor, metonymy, and cultural associations. Food idioms are widely used to describe personality, emotions, social roles, and behavior. Drawing on both international scholars and Uzbek linguists, the paper identifies key semantic mechanisms and classifies idioms into thematic groups. The findings demonstrate that idioms rely on conceptual metaphors, cultural symbolism, and semantic shift, contributing to a deeper understanding of English phraseology for learners in Uzbekistan.*

**Key Words:** *food idioms, semantics, figurative meaning, conceptual metaphor, phraseology, Uzbek linguists, semantic analysis*

**Abstrakt.** *Ushbu maqolada qoraqalpoq o'quvchilariga ingliz tili idiomalarini o'rgatish usuli sifatida geymifikatsiyaning samaradorligi o'rganilgan. Idiomalar ona tillarida metaforalarni turlicha tushunadigan o'quvchilar uchun lingvistik va madaniy qiyinchiliklarni keltirib chiqaradi. Ishda geymifikatsiyaning pedagogik tamoyillari va uning idiomatik kompetensiyani rivojlantirishdagi o'rni tahlil qilingan. Shuningdek, o'zbek va qoraqalpoq olimlarining ishlari o'rganilib, O'zbekistonda zamonaviy ingliz tilini o'qitishda interfaol va kommunikativ yondashuvlarning dolzarbligi ko'rsatilgan. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, geymifikatsiya motivatsiyani oshiradi, eslab qolishni yaxshilaydi va madaniy xabardorlikni qo'llab-quvvatlaydi.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *gaimifikatsiya, ingliz tilidagi frazeologik birliklar (idiomalar), qoraqalpoq talabalari, idiomatik kompetensiya, interaktiv o'qitish, O'zbekiston metodikasi, o'yin asosidagi ta'lim*

**Абстракт.** *В данной статье рассматривается эффективность геймификации как метода обучения английским идиомам каракалпакских студентов. Фразеологизмы представляют лингвистические и культурные трудности для учащихся, которые по-разному концептуализируют метафоры на своих родных языках. В работе анализируются педагогические принципы геймификации и ее роль в развитии идиоматической компетентности. Также рассматриваются труды узбекских и каракалпакских ученых, демонстрирующие актуальность интерактивного и коммуникативного подходов в современном преподавании английского языка в Узбекистане. Результаты показывают, что геймификация повышает мотивацию, улучшает запоминание и поддерживает культурную осведомленность.*

**Ключевые слова:** геймификация, английские идиомы, каракалпакские студенты, идиоматическая компетентность, интерактивное обучение, методика Узбекистана, обучение на основе игр

## 1. Introduction

Idioms represent an important part of the English lexicon, conveying figurative meanings that cannot be interpreted literally [4.]. Food idioms constitute one of the most culturally rich idiom groups in English.

Uzbek linguists such as S. Makhkamova (2019), A. G'aniyeva (2020), N. To'laganova (2021), R. Allaberganov (2020) and Karakalpak researchers like N. Bekmuratova (2022) and G. Utegenova (2021) emphasize that idioms must be analyzed in terms of their semantic, cultural, and cognitive dimensions. Their research highlights the importance of metaphor, cultural connotation, and phraseological transformation in foreign language classrooms in Uzbekistan.

The present study aims to analyze the semantic features of English food idioms and classify them according to their conceptual and figurative meanings.

## 2. Literature Review

### International Research

International scholars such as Lakoff & Johnson (1980), Fernando (1996), Moon (1998), and Kövecses (2010) have studied idioms from semantic and cognitive perspectives. They argue that figurative meaning arises from metaphorical mapping and cultural knowledge.

### Uzbek and Karakalpak Scholars

A significant body of work on semantics, phraseology, and idioms has been produced by Uzbek linguists:

### Uzbek Researchers

S. Makhkamova (2019): emphasizes the role of contextual and communicative strategies in interpreting idiomatic meaning.

A. G'aniyeva (2020): explores semantic mechanisms of English idioms and their metaphorical patterns.

N. To'laganova (2021): analyzes semantic and cultural aspects of metaphor-based idioms in English.

R. Allaberganov (2020): focuses on semantic classification of phraseological units and the role of imagery.

S. Abdullaeva (2018): examines the metaphorical transfer and semantic shift in English phraseology.

M. Jo'rayev (2017): studies comparative semantics of English and Uzbek idioms.

### Karakalpak Researchers

N. Bekmuratova (2022): investigates semantic interpretation and teaching methods of English idioms in Karakalpak contexts.



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G. Utegenova (2021): explores cultural and semantic features of idiomatic expressions for regional learners.

A. Esbergenova (2018): studies cognitive mechanisms behind figurative meanings in English phraseology.

These scholars collectively agree that idioms function through metaphor, cultural coding, and stable semantic associations.

### 3. Methodology

The study applies qualitative semantic analysis, including:

- collection of common English food idioms,
- classification into semantic groups,
- analysis of metaphorical, associative, and cultural meanings,
- comparison with Uzbek scholarly interpretations of idiom semantics.

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### 4.1 Semantic Categories of English Food Idioms

##### 1. Personality Traits

- “Bad egg” – dishonest person
- “Smart cookie” – intelligent person
- “Sweet person” – kind, pleasant

Uzbek researchers such as [1.] note that personality idioms often derive from taste associations, reflecting universal cognitive metaphors.

##### 2. Emotional States

- “Butterflies in my stomach” – nervousness
- “Spill the beans” – reveal a secret
- “Salt in the wound” – worsen the situation

According to [11.], taste-based idioms frequently express emotions due to strong sensory associations.

##### 3. Social Status and Behavior

- “Big cheese” – important person
- “Couch potato” – lazy person
- “Piece of cake” – easy task

Karakalpak linguist [7.] points out that “food status” idioms often reflect historical cultural values.

##### 4. Difficult Situations

- “A hard nut to crack” – difficult problem
- “Walk on eggshells” – act very cautiously
- “Put all your eggs in one basket” – risk all on one attempt

Uzbek scholar [6.] notes that such idioms rely on literal physical properties (hardness, fragility).

#### 4.2 Mechanisms of Figurative Meaning



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a. Conceptual Metaphor

English food idioms rely heavily on conceptual metaphors:[3,5]

- EMOTIONS ARE TASTES (bitter experience)
- PROBLEMS ARE FOOD OBJECTS (a hard nut to crack)

b. Metonymy

A food item stands for a person:

- “Big cheese” – high-value, “premium” person

c. Cultural Symbolism

For example:

- “Take it with a grain of salt” relates to ancient Roman beliefs.

Uzbek scholars note that such idioms require cultural competence for proper interpretation[5.].

4.3 Semantic Shift

Food idioms often undergo semantic extension:

“Piece of cake” originally described contest prizes; now means “easy.”

“Bring home the bacon” shifted from literal food to metaphorical income.

Uzbek researcher [10.] similarly describes semantic drift in Uzbek idioms.

5. Conclusion

The semantic analysis of English food idioms reveals a rich system of figurative meaning derived from conceptual metaphor, cultural association, and semantic extension. Uzbek and Karakalpak linguists contribute significantly to understanding how idioms function cognitively and culturally, stressing the importance of semantic awareness in English language education in Uzbekistan. Understanding the semantics of food idioms enhances learners’ phraseological competence and cultural understanding.

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