

METHODS OF NOMINATION IN FOOD-RELATED VOCABULARY

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Abstract. Food names reflect not only culinary practices but also the cultural and cognitive processes through which people perceive and categorize the world around them. This article explores the main methods of nomination found in food-related vocabulary, focusing on metaphorical, metonymic, and toponymic naming. The study draws on examples from English and Uzbek and applies descriptive, comparative, and semantic analysis to identify the motivations underlying food names. The analysis shows that metaphorical nomination is often based on similarities in shape or appearance, while metonymic nomination relies on associations such as ingredient–dish and creator–product relationships. Toponymic nomination connects food items with particular places and highlights the role of regional identity in culinary naming. Examples from both languages demonstrate that food names preserve cultural traditions, historical experience, and local knowledge. The findings suggest that nomination plays an important role in the formation of food-related vocabulary and reflects the close relationship between language, culture, and human cognition.

Keywords: food-related vocabulary, nomination, food naming, metaphorical nomination, metonymic nomination, toponymic nomination, gastronyms, culinary culture.

Introduction. Food is an important component of human culture, serving not merely as a biological necessity but also as a medium of social interaction, identity, and cultural continuity (Boutaud et al., 2016). As an integral part of everyday life, food has generated a rich and diverse vocabulary that reflects the historical, cultural, and social experiences of different communities. Food names are not arbitrary linguistic labels; rather, they embody how people perceive, categorize, and interpret the culinary world around them.

The formation of food-related vocabulary is closely connected with various methods of nomination. Through these processes, linguistic communities create names that reflect the appearance, origin, function, ingredients, or cultural significance of culinary products. The study of food naming therefore provides valuable insights into the relationship between language, cognition, and culture. In many languages, food names

preserve traces of historical contacts, regional identities, traditional practices, and collective cultural memory.

Among the most productive methods of nomination in food-related vocabulary are metaphorical, metonymic, and toponymic nomination. Metaphorical nomination is based on perceived similarities between a food item and another object or concept. In contrast, metonymic nomination relies on associative relationships such as ingredient, container, producer, or cultural context. Toponymic nomination links food products to their geographical places of origin, highlighting the role of regional identity in culinary naming.

This study aims to analyze these methods of nomination and their role in the formation of food-related lexical units. Drawing on both general linguistic theories and examples from English and Uzbek food vocabulary, the study examines how naming practices reflect cognitive processes, cultural values, and historical traditions embedded in culinary discourse.

Methods. The study employs descriptive, comparative, and semantic analysis methods. Examples were collected from English and Uzbek culinary vocabulary and analyzed according to their motivational features and nomination mechanisms.

Metaphorical Nomination

Metaphorical nomination is one of the most productive mechanisms in the formation of food-related vocabulary. According to cognitive linguistic theory, metaphor is not merely a stylistic device but a conceptual process through which people understand one domain of experience in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010). In food naming, metaphorical nomination occurs when a culinary product is named on the basis of perceived similarities in shape, color, texture, taste, or other salient characteristics.

Food-related metaphors are widespread across languages because they facilitate the identification and categorization of culinary products through familiar associations. By connecting a food item with a well-known object, animal, or body part, speakers create names that are both descriptive and memorable. Such nominations reveal how human cognition relies on analogy and visual perception in the organization of lexical knowledge.

English culinary vocabulary provides numerous examples of metaphorical nomination. The term *ladyfingers* refers to a type of elongated biscuit whose shape resembles slender fingers. Similarly, *cat's tongue biscuits* derive their name from their thin and narrow form, while *oyster mushrooms* are named after their resemblance to oyster shells. In each case, the name of an unrelated object is transferred to a food item based on visual similarity.

Although metaphor has been extensively investigated in general Uzbek linguistics, the metaphorical nomination of food-related lexical units has received comparatively limited scholarly attention. Existing studies have primarily focused on metaphor as a semantic and stylistic phenomenon, whereas metaphorically motivated food names remain relatively underexplored. Nevertheless, some culinary names appear to be based on visual resemblance. A possible example is *atirgul somsa* (“rose-shaped somsa”), whose name is motivated by its resemblance to the form of a rose. Such examples suggest that metaphorical thinking may also contribute to the formation of Uzbek food-related vocabulary, although further research is required to establish a systematic classification of these nominations.

Metonymic Nomination

Metonymic nomination is another productive mechanism in the formation of food-related vocabulary. Unlike metaphor, which is based on similarity, metonymy relies on associations of contiguity or conceptual relatedness between entities. In food naming, metonymic nomination occurs when a culinary product, ingredient, container, place, producer, or occasion is used to refer to another closely associated element within the same conceptual domain. Such nominations reflect the tendency of speakers to identify food items through their most salient or culturally significant features.

English culinary vocabulary contains several examples of metonymic nomination based on the creator–product relationship. The names *sandwich*, *Caesar salad*, and *Earl Grey tea* originate from the names of individuals associated with their creation, popularization, or historical background. In these cases, the names of people are transferred to the food products themselves, illustrating a metonymic shift from creator to creation. Such nominations demonstrate how cultural and historical associations contribute to the formation of culinary terminology.

Uzbek culinary vocabulary also contains examples of ingredient-based naming, such as *moshxoʻrda* and *noʻxat shoʻrva*, in which a salient ingredient serves as the basis for identifying the dish. Here, a prominent component of the dish serves as the basis for its nomination and comes to represent the culinary product as a whole. This reflects a part–whole relationship, which is one of the most common forms of metonymic thinking.

The prevalence of metonymic nomination demonstrates that food vocabulary is shaped not only by physical characteristics but also by cultural practices and patterns of social interaction. Through metonymy, culinary terms acquire meanings that extend beyond the food itself, reflecting the central role of food in economic life, hospitality, and communal traditions. Consequently, metonymic nomination serves as an important

linguistic mechanism for encoding cultural values and collective experience within food-related vocabulary.

Toponymic nomination.

Dorzhieva and Gao (2022) argue that gastronyms containing toponymic components reflect not only geographical origin but also the historical, cultural, and environmental characteristics of a region. Toponymic nomination links a food product directly to its place of origin. Lexical units formed through toponymy serve as linguistic markers of regional identity and culinary heritage.

Globally, *Cheddar* cheese derives its name from the village of Cheddar in England, while *Parmesan* is associated with Parma in Italy. Uzbek cuisine provides numerous examples of this phenomenon. *Samarqand noni* (Samarqand bread) is renowned for its distinctive baking traditions and is closely associated with the historical city of Samarqand. Similarly, *Farg'ona qovuni* (Fergana melon) and *Buxoro holvasi* (Bukhara halva) incorporate place names that emphasize regional origin and cultural identity.

Such names not only indicate geographical provenance but also preserve local culinary traditions and collective cultural memory. Therefore, toponymic nomination functions as both a linguistic and a cultural mechanism in the formation of food-related vocabulary.

Conclusion

The linguistic landscape of food is a dynamic and evolving system. By examining the methods of nomination in food-related vocabulary, we gain valuable insights into how language reflects cultural traditions, historical experience, and social practices. Metaphorical, metonymic, and toponymic nomination are not merely naming conventions; they are cognitive and cultural mechanisms through which societies categorize, interpret, and preserve knowledge about food.

As this analysis demonstrates, these methods of nomination play a fundamental role in the formation of food-related lexical units. Through examples drawn from both English and Uzbek culinary vocabulary, it becomes evident that food names encode cultural values, regional identities, and patterns of human cognition. Consequently, the study of food-related nomination contributes not only to lexical semantics but also to a broader understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and collective memory.

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