

# Uzbek national cuisine ethnographisms in English translations

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The article is devoted to the ethnographisms of meals given in English translations.

**Methodology:** Most of Uzbek rituals possess a national dish. It became a tradition to prepare a special meal in various ceremonies, be it wedding ceremony, lament tradition, or religious. **Results:** Several translation sources are comparatively analysed and conclusions are drawn. Specific ceremonial meals, their types are investigated and contrasted as well. The ethnologists and translators utilize three ways of depicting ethnographisms: transliteration, giving definitions, and translations. **Conclusion:** With the efforts of foreign ethnologists and translators readers get the information about Uzbek national meals in the English Language, which causes admiration that not only local but also foreign scientists, ethnologists and anthropologists are interested very much in our nation's meals.

## 1. Introduction

Most of Uzbek rituals possess a national dish. It became a tradition to prepare a special meal in various ceremonies, be it wedding ceremony, lament tradition, or religious. For instance: Osh i.e. Palov in wedding ceremonies; sumalak, halim, halisa, tuxumbarak in Navruz; g'arma or qora osh on the fortieth day after the burial; o'moch in Bibi Seshanba rite, shirguruch in Mushkulkushod, Mavlud and when the child cuts his first tooth; ugra in Besh kecha and etc. These dishes have already become symbols of ceremonies and rites. Having these foods forms the main step of above-mentioned ceremonies and rites (Abazov, 2007).

Literal units depicting names of national meals are considered ethnographisms. Such ethnographiosms form most part of the Uzbek language vocabulary. According to the dialect synonym ethnographisms are observed.

It is evident that each nation has special meals peculiar to its taste and condition. So, there are various names of meals that differ with appearance and names in several locations (destination). Some meals can have the same names but because of the difference in cooking they are connected with the name of a certain place. A superb meal "osh" is called "Andijoncha palov" (Andijan palov), "Buxorocho palov" or "Oshi sofi" (Bukharan palov), "Xorazmcha palov" (Khorasm palov), "Samarqandcha palov" (Samarkand palov) due to the process of preparation (Seitova et al., 2007).

## 2. Materials and methods

Uzbek traditions and national cuisine ceased the attention of many ethnographers around the world (Kandiyoti and Azimova, 2004). So here we can mention the names of such authors as H.A.Vamberg, M. Petersen, D. Kandiyoti and N. Azimova, M.E. Louw, R. Abazov and etc. Palov is translated into English as "pilaf", "pilav" in the book "Culture and Customs of Central Asia" by R.Abazov. "A Treasury of Uzbek Legends and Lore" by M. Petersen,

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“Sketches of Central Asia” by H.A. Vambery contain valuable information and translations of Uzbek meals. At the same time the definitions of this meal are given. For example: “Osh – A rice dish like pilaf”; “national dishes such as pilav and besh-barmak” and etc.

National meal typical to one region can be unfamiliar to another region of the same country. “Beshbarmoq” translated as “besh-barmak” is a national dish of Kazakh people, or “bichak” prepared with greens or pumpkin is distinctive to Bukhara region. It is usually fried on both sides in a frying pan smeared with a little oil (Rosenberger, 2007).

Ethnographer Y. Bobojonov gives information about the national meal “halisa”. As he mentions “halisa” is a special meal and just mutton used in cooking in Khorazm. In the process of preparing Bukharan meal with the same name not only mutton but also beef can be used (Louw, 2007).

There can be observed such ceremonies distinguished with their specific dishes. Ritual eating is considered the main step of the ceremony. The ceremony is so called in order to emphasize the meal. For example: the ceremony “Bibi Seshanba” connected with the cult momo is named “Oshibibi” which means meal of bibi i.e. granny’s meal in English (Fischer and Sai, 2015).

In spite of the fact that the lament traditions are woeful and mournful these ceremonies include their special menu as well. After the deceased taken to be buried there slaughtered the animal and the soup is served in most places. Actually, this custom is peculiar to Turkic people. Its formation dates back to the belief associated with the horse totem and the cult of ox. For instance, N.I. Shatinova informs that Altay people slaughter horse of the deceased and prepare special meal on the day of burial (Dirks and Davronov, 2005).

Lament traditions are specific with the food cooked in them. For example: The soup without onion on the third day, *chalpak* \* without salt and *qora osh*\* (*mastava*\* without rice but lentils) on the seventh day, *shovla*\* without carrot on the fortieth day (in *Nurota*\*), *g’arma*\* - thick *atala*\* with pea (in other districts of Bukhara besides *Olot* and *Karakul*) and etc.

According to the magic conception lament meals are served for three people in one dish. Osh is cooked in honor of the deceased in many places of our republic. It is called “*mehmon oshi*” i.e. “guest’s meal”. Participants do not usually eat the meal because of the superstition. The rest of the meal is spread on the roof of the house for the birds to be eaten. This ritual meal is called “*qoqin oshi*” in Khorazm (Petersen, 2000).

### 3. Discussion and results

There are meals cooked in a certain season. *Sumalak* is considered one of such dishes. It is a ritual delicacy of Navruz and symbolizes restoration of nature which is dead in winter. It is difficult to imagine spring and Navruz without *Sumalak sayli*\*. Old people lick and venerate *sumalak* being thankful that they reached these days (Kayumova, 2015). An American scholar M. Petersen attempts to explain *sumalak* in this way: “*Sumalak* – The most favorite dish of Navruz using the sprouts of wheat.”

*Somsa* is a national food to decorate and enrich *dasturkhon*\* of Uzbek ceremonies. It is called “*sambo’sa*” in Bukhara dialect. The process of *somsa* preparation is depicted in English in the book of Marilyn Petersen: “*Somsa* – A pastry, which is rolled out, cut in squares and filled with a meat and onion mixture. Sometimes pumpkin is used, but also mixed with onions. After filling the pastry, it is baked in the oven for 30 minutes, or until brown.” M. Petersen informs that Uzbeks prepare *somsa* mostly with “*yalpiz*” in Navruz. The scholar prefers to give a definition rather than translating the word “*yalpiz*” as mint: “*yalpiz* – an edible green grass”.

Service of a salad called “*chimcha*” in Korean language and prepared with carrots indicates to the relationship of two Korean and Uzbek people. The translator prefers to name this salad “*Sabzi*” and defines it as: “Carrots which are grated and served raw as in a salad. To season, use vinegar, garlic and *cilantro*” (Vambery, 2008).

An apple called “*seb*” in Tajik and contains the letter “s” is served fresh as well. That’s true that apple is “*seb*” in Tajik and “*olma*” in the Uzbek language. But these two words cannot be used as synonyms in the Uzbek language.

Things served in the *dasturkhon* of Navruz is called “*Haftsin*” and means seven different foods. Although “*Haftsalom*” is considered a drink M. Petersen includes it to “*Haftsin*” and explains “*Haftsalom*” in this way: “*Haftsalom*” – Seven greetings. Messages are written in Arabic using a special color of ink, which is edible. They are put in a bowl, which is full of the nectar of flowers, and each guest will take a sip”.

It is evident from the given definition that the translator is confusing the nectar of the flower “*gulob*” with the other drink which is called “*g’olingob*”. The latter is made with dried apricots. The apricots are boiled, cooled, filtered and served in the *dasturkhon* of Navruz. The nectar of the flower is the liquid with a pleasant smell made from roses and bitter in taste but useful for health. So it can be drunk only when a drop or two is added to tea or boiled water sweetened with sugar (Scott, 2012).

Green grass – “*maisa*” is also put in the *dasturkhon* of Navruz. The wheat is sprouted until it has grown to about 10-15 centimeters. Although there is a translation of the word “*Maisa*” it is given in original form and clarified in English language by M. Petersen: “*Maisa* – This is the grass of wheat used as a table decoration. The wheat is sprouted until it has grown to about 10 centimeters”. It shows that the scholar wants to follow the rules of interpreting ethnographisms (Маъруфов, 1981).

*Halisa* and *Halim* are considered favorites of Navruz. These two dishes are divergent with the preparation process and ingredients. M. Petersen attempts to clarify them: “*Halisa* – First wheat, milk or water, and a whole sheep are cooked together in a heavy pot, which is buried underground. A fire is built around it and it cooks for about 16 hours. While this is cooking, a soup is prepared with meat, beans, carrots, onions, and fat. When the wheat and mutton are cooked, the bones of the sheep will have dissolved. It will have the texture of a heavy paste, and is served with the soup” and “*Halim* – mutton cooked with wheat” (Scott, 2012).

One of the compilers of the book “O’zbek taomlari (Uzbek cuisine)” G.R. Mack translates the cooking process of the national meal “*halim*”: “*Halim* – Wheat porridge. Crush wheat with mortar and pestle, rinse in water to separate husks. Sift and soak in hot water 5-6 hours. Cut meat into 50-60 g pieces and sear in hot oil. Add soaked wheat and water. Cook, constantly stirring, on low heat 1 1/2 hours. Add salt. Before serving season with ground black pepper and cinnamon” (Petersen, 2000).

If compared procedure of “halisa” and “halim” it becomes obvious that the latter is cooked only with mutton, whereas the former is cooked both with beef and mutton. Besides, wheat is cooked together with meat in a large pot without rinsing in hot water and is not served with pepper and cinnamon. It indicates that dishes differ because of the geographical location even being national ones and cooked in one country.

Whenever a guest visits so “palov” is accustomed to be cooked in Uzbek families. Palov is translated in different ways such as osh, pilaff, pilau, palau, ash and etc. Because of this ritual these national dishes attracted both foreign and regional authors. So they have translated it into other languages. One of such sources is “O‘zbek taomlari (Uzbek cuisine)” where is various types of palov mentioned in: “Bukhoro pilaff with raisins, Fergana pilaff, Kashkadarin pilaff, Samarkand pilaff, pilaff with quinces, garlic, stuffed grape leaves, chickpeas, chicken, horse sausage (kazi)” and etc. M. Petersen who taught English to Uzbek children and students writes about national foods in her book. So she gives a definition to osh: “Osh – A rice dish like pilaf. Fry onions, meat and carrots together in oil. When they are well-browned, add rice and water. May also include raisins, garbonzo beans and cloves of garlic cooked whole without separating. Cook for about 30 minutes” (Petersen, 2000).

Furthermore, the first traveler H. Vambery translates this dish as palau, ash, pilau and pilaf. The scholar liked it and attempted to give a detailed process of preparation: “A few spoonfuls of fat are melted (in Central Asia the fat of the tail is usually taken) in a vessel, and as soon as it is quite hot, the meat, cut up into small pieces, is thrown in. When these are in part fried, water is poured upon it to the depth of about three fingers, and it is left slowly boiling until the meat is soft; pepper and thinly-sliced carrots are then added, and on the top of these ingredients is put a layer of rice, after it has been freed from its mucilaginous parts. Some more water is added, and as soon as it has been absorbed by the rice the fire is lessened, and the pot, well-closed, is left over the red-hot coals, until the rice, meat and carrots, are thoroughly cooked in the steam. After half an hour the lid is opened, and the food served in such a way that the different layers lie separately in the dish, first the rice, floating in fat, then the carrots and the meat at the top, with which the meal is begun. This dish is excellent and indispensable alike on the royal table and in the hut of the poorest” (Petersen, 2000).

Each detail of preparation process even the amount of water poured upon the meat is taken into account in the translation. Thus foreigners have access to Uzbek ethnographisms associated with the national meals through these translations.

“Chuchvara” – a national dish. Several kinds of “chuchvara” exist in Uzbekistan. For instance: meat dumpling soup, boiled dumplings, fried dumplings, dumplings with greens, potato dumplings and etc. This dish is usually served with sour cream when boiled. The translation and definition give a chance to both Uzbek and foreign readers be informed of this meal: “Chuchvara – Little dumplings. A Pasta cut in small squares and filled with meat and onions. They are boiled for about five minutes and served in a soup, or with sour cream”.

The scholar gives a detailed process of “no‘xatsho‘rva”: “Nohatshurva – Soup with garbonzo beans, meat, onions, potatoes and carrots”. The translator adapted the word to her pronunciation. Mixed, back, labialized vowel “o” is replaced with broad, back, labialized vowel “o” in the first and with the narrow, back, labialized vowel “u” in the third syllables. Back lingual, velar, fricative, unvoiced consonant “x” of the second syllable is changed to fricative, unvoiced, pharyngeal consonant “h”. Thus, the meaning of the word is kept but the pronunciation is distorted. It causes admiration that M. Petersen tried to keep national word, but it could be translated “Chickpea Soup” as it is given in the book “Uzbek Cuisine”.

Lamb is called “barra”. The meal made with the lamb is called “barrakabob” among Uzbek people. Areas where karakul sheep breeding is developed, labs of three or four days are slaughtered for their neat and fine fur and the meat is cooked. Fried lamb is called “jirriq” in Karakul.

M. Petersen attempting to keep the ethnographism “barrakabob” gives explanation of this meal like that: “Barrakabob – Lamb, potatoes and onions cooked in the fat of the lamb. May be served with cilantro” (Petersen, 2000).

Noodles are considered both ritual and daily meal. Mostly this dish is prepared on the fifth day of the child’s birth. The ceremony of “Besh kecha” which means the fifth night is held on the same day. The translator M. Petersen gives a definition of this meal: “Ugra Oshi – A dish made with noodles, meat, carrots, tomatoes, onions, beans and oil” (Rosenberger, 2007). She tries to explain how the dish is prepared rather than translating the name of it.

Umoch – a ritual meal of the ceremony “Bibi Seshanba”. The preparation process of it is similar to noodles. But there is not meat in “umoch”. Necessary ingredients are: chopped dough, dried apricots, lentils, peas, beans. Ethnographism “umoch” is observed in the translations of Danish anthropologist and ethnographer M.E. Louw as “o‘moch” and umoch (milk pudding) in D. Kandiotti and N. Azimova’s article.

Marilyn Petersen mentions the national meal “shulla” as well. The author uses the name of another national meal “shovla” while translating “shulla” and tries to keep them in original version like: “Shulla – a rice dish made with pumpkin, the same as shovla”. Although she gives this definition to “shulla” in other places explains “shovla – a rice dish sometimes made with pumpkin” (Scott, 2012). It becomes evident that the translator considers these two meals as one. But they are different meals. They differ even in the preparation and the appearance. “Shulla” is prepared with the putting noodles in boiling water. Salt and yogurt is added to taste. Chickpea is added too. “Shovla” is as a liquid form of “palov”. Oil or the tail fat of a sheep, meat cut in small cubes, stripped carrots, and rice are put. Carrots can be replaced with pumpkin. “Shovla” is translated as “Shavlya – rice porridge with meat” by G.R. Makk.

Moshkichiri – one of the Uzbeks’ most favorite dishes. The name of this dish is given as “Moshkichiri – food made with lentils”, “Moshkichiri – mung bean porridge” and “Moshkichiri: a dish made with mung beans and rice”.

“Piyoba” is a less calorific daily meal.

The translator M. Petersen tries to explain it “Piyoba – soup mostly cooked with oil, water and onion” as the preparation process of both dishes is close to each other (Petersen, 2000).

Uzbeks also attract the world with their traditional sweets. Astonishment and interest became basis for translation of the ethnographisms associated with the same topic (around this topic).

Holva – national sweets. It has a ceremonial essence. According to the rituals if matchmakers of the fiancé visit the girl’s house asking her hand and the girl’s side agree they give white headscarf and “holva” as the symbol of whiteness. That’s why “holva” is included into the list of ethnographisms. It can be witnessed that this national candy is greatly paid attention in the translations. Marilyn Petersen prefers to give two definitions to this candy:

1. Holva – different kinds of candy.
2. Holva – candy made with sugar and flour, may be colored red.

William Dirks translates as “holva: sweet dish made from flour, sugar, and oil.”

“Kho`rozqand” – children’s favourite. This candy is translated into English “Khoroskand – sugar candy in the shape of a cock, and hardened on a stick” and “Sugar candy in the shape of a rooster”. Both of the translators give almost the same definition which deserves surprise.

“Novvot” which is also considered type of candies translated into English as “novvot – an amber colored hard sugar candy” and “rock sugar”.

M. Petersen translates “obakidandon” and “nishallo” too: “Obaki dandon – Very tasty sugar candy”; “Nishallo – A sweet treat made with the whites of eggs and sugar, like marshmallow” (Petersen, 2000).

One thing should be clarified here. Marshmallow is elastic like soft rubber but “nishallo” is a thick foamy and sticky substance.

There is a legend connected with Nuh in XIII century writer Nosiriddin Rabg`uzi’s work “Qissasi Rabg`uzi”. “Shinni” is mentioned there for the first time. It is told that “shinni” is made with grapes. However, M. Petersen thinks that “Shini – the nectar of the mulberry”. In order to clarify it we have searched for information in explanatory and bilingual dictionaries. In these dictionaries “shinni” is given as “syrup made from mulberries, grapes”. Thus, both of the authors closely approached to the meaning of the word (Rosenberger, 2007).

Special room for cooking food is called “oshxona”. Although there is a difference between these words, the translator uses café, restaurant and teahouse to explain the word “oshkhona”: “Ashkana (also Oshkhona) - A traditional café, restaurant or teahouse, which serves national dishes such as pilav and besh-barmak”.

“Choykhona” is another place where tea, sweets and bread is offered: “Chaikhana (chai-kha-na). A traditional teahouse in Central Asia”.

Choykhona is given in three ways:

1. Chaikhana – original form;
2. Chai-kha-na – divided into syllables;
3. Teahouse – a word-for-word translation which contains two components “tea” and “house”.

“Dasturkhon” is a square piece of cloth to put foods on while eating. This ethnographism is translated as “dasturkhon – The tablecloth spread with many delicacies”.

## 4. Conclusion

Several rituals and praises associated with “dasturkhon” are formed among the Uzbek nation. The praises sung, especially, in the process of quilting “dasturkhon” are highly esteemed. It can be said that on behalf of these praises “dasturkhon” is formed as ethnographism.

National dishes “choynak” and “piyola” are used for drinking tea. Though there are equivalents of these words “teapot” and “teacup” in English the translator prefers to keep their original version. Her definition is to the point: “Piola – a small bowl about the size of a cup, but without a handle”.

Uzbeks are well-known with various types of bread: sutli non – bread kneaded with milk, obi non – flat bread, jizzali non – flat bread with fat, kunjutli va sedanali non – flat bread with sesame and poppy seeds, piyozli non – flat bread with onions, shirmoy non – chickpea and anise bread, lochira – locira and etc. Fatir is also a kind of bread which can be observed in English translations: “Fatir – a round flat bread, slightly sweet”.

A certain object usually laid for making dough is called “supra”. This ethnographism is given without translation in original version.

“Tandir” is a special object for baking bread. The ethnographism “tandir” is translated as “an oven, the bread is placed on the clay wall over the wood fire”.

Meals prepared in the flame of “saksovl” are tasty. “Saksovl” can be found in the deserts of Central Asia. It is also ethnographism peculiar to Central Asia. The translation of this tree is different in various sources. For instance: “Seksavul (Anabasis ammodendron, holoxylon) is a plant abundantly found in the Central Asian steppes”, or “saksovl tree – a little tree with long roots that lives in the desert mountains”.

All in all, lexical units depicting Uzbek national meals are included into ethnographisms. There are a number of ethnographisms of Uzbek meals in Uzbek dictionaries. According to the dialects they form synonyms (Petersen, 2000).

These ethnographisms are translated into English. The ethnologists and translators utilize three ways of depicting ethnographisms: transliteration, giving definitions, and translations. With the efforts of foreign ethnologists and translators readers get the information about Uzbek national meals in the English Language, which causes admiration that not only local but also foreign scientists, ethnologists and anthropologists are interested very much in our nation’s meals (Scott, 2012).

### 4.1 NOTES

\*atala-a porridge-like food made from flour and grease

\*chalpak - deep-fried flat cake

\*dasturkhon- cloth spread over a table or upon the floor

\*g`arma - thick atala\* with pea

\*Karakul- geographic denomination: name of place located in Bukhara region

\*mastava - a type of soup made with rice, meat, and vegetables

\*Nurota - geographic denomination: name of place located in Navoi region

\*Olot - geographic denomination: name of place located in Bukhara region

\*qora osh - soup like mastava without rice but lentils

\*sayl- festivity: Sumalak sayli, Navruz sayli

\*shovla - rice porridge

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