

LINGUOCULTURAL ASPECTS OF FOLK PROVERBS WITH THE LEXEME “TEA”

Ziyadullayeva Gulchehra Fatillo qizi

1st year graduate student of Bukhara State Pedagogical Institute

Abstract. Proverbs have always been a subject of attention for researchers as a mirror reflecting the identity, uniqueness, culture, and socio-political life of a nation. They are a synthesis of the spiritual image, ideals, dreams, aspirations, and reflections on nature and society of the hardworking people, as well as a generalized expression of life experience. Therefore, the scientific study of folk proverbs from linguistic-poetic, linguocultural, and anthropocentric perspectives is of great relevance.

This article analyzes the place of the concept of tea in Uzbek, Chinese, and Russian cultures, the meanings expressed by this word, and the linguocultural features of proverbs involving the lexeme “tea.”

Keywords: concept, linguoculturology, associative background, proverb, lexeme, lacuna, microfield.

Linguoculturology reflects the traditions and culture of a people through various conceptual units. The transition of words from diachronic to synchronic stages, the enrichment of the field of linguistics, and the expression of various connotative meanings of words are all the lifeblood of linguistics.

In linguoculturology, one of the concepts that reflects the ancient traditions and national identity of a people is tea. The tea concept has distinctive features that demonstrate our national values. Tea is not only a symbol of Uzbek identity, but also of Chinese, Russian, and other nations. As we know, China is the homeland of tea, and tea holds a special place in their culture.

And in Russia? How significant is tea in Russian cultural life? Many people believe coffee, not tea, is the national beverage in Russia. But is this really so? According to V.V. Pokhlebkina, a researcher of Russian tea culture:

“Russian dramaturgy gives a clear answer to the sensitive and often debated question of national pride—what is Russia’s true national drink: tea (even if it is Chinese tea) or our own vodka? The answer is tea.

Why? Because tea has been consumed in all Russian plays from the 18th century to the present. Not only is tea consumed continuously, but it is consumed throughout the history of Russian dramaturgy by all social classes. Therefore, tea has ultimately become a nationwide, ‘classless’ beverage. This very aspect makes tea a unique and truly national phenomenon.” [4, 15]

As seen from this, tea represents not only a drink but a linguocultural competence in Uzbek, Russian, and Chinese cultures. Tea expresses not only a literal meaning but also other conceptual content. In different “cultural layers” (according to Y.S. Stepanov), it conveys different meanings. For example, in Russian culture, “tea” expresses the following meanings:

1. “plant”;
2. “dried leaves”;
3. “beverage”;
4. “tea-drinking ceremony.”

In Chinese culture, tea expresses these facets:

1. beverage;
2. plant;
3. dark brown color;
4. engagement gift;
5. tea oil.

In Uzbek culture, the conceptual unit of tea appears in different contexts:

1. a basis for naming a national eating establishment (choyxona);
2. a first token of hospitality when a guest arrives;
3. a mirror reflecting a girl’s delicacy and wisdom (a bride-to-be serves tea first);
4. a thirst-quenching beverage (even in summer, both hot and cold tea are consumed);
5. a metonym for food in general (e.g., “Come in, we have a cup of tea”);
6. a means for warm, sincere conversation;
7. a remedy for headaches;
8. a cure for many ailments. [1, 64]

Clearly, tea takes on various forms and meanings across cultures. These meanings can create cultural lacunae for speakers of different nations. For example, the association of tea with hospitality and ceremony may be a lacuna for Chinese people, while the meaning of tea as “dark brown” may be similarly unfamiliar to Uzbeks. Tea thus forms multiple microfields depending on the context.

Notably, the Chinese value the pure, natural taste of tea and never add anything to it. However, in Uzbek and Russian cultures, tea is often consumed with honey, sugar, lemon, or mint, or accompanied by sweets.

In Chinese literature, there are many tea-related proverbs. For example:

1. "It is better to live a day without food than a day without tea." [4, 13]

This reflects the value placed on tea in Chinese culture, emphasizing its daily role as a source of energy, relaxation, and health.

2. "A cup of high-quality tea saves the need for a doctor." [4,13]

In traditional Chinese medicine, tea is considered healing.

3. "In the daytime, the skin covers the water; at night, the water covers the skin." [4 ,13]

This metaphor relates to Chinese medicine, suggesting that evening tea relaxes the body and reduces stress.

4. "No ceremony is complete without tea." [4, 13]

This emphasizes the sacred and ceremonial importance of tea in Chinese culture.

5. "You can have alcohol with cigarettes, but never tea—they are enemies." [4, 13]

Here, tea symbolizes purity and health, while smoking is associated with harm. Tea represents cleanliness and vitality; smoking symbolizes poison.

In Russian culture, tea-related proverbs are fewer:

1. "Чай пить – не дрова рубить" (Drinking tea is not chopping wood). [4, 13]

This suggests tea is associated with rest and socializing, not hard labor.

2. "Чай – малый неглупый, но без сахара и он дурак" (Tea is clever, but without sugar, even it is stupid). [4, 13]

This implies that Russians prefer their tea with sugar and that sweetness enhances the experience.

3. "По-купечески чай пьет, но не по-купечески расплачивается" (Drinks tea like a merchant, but doesn't pay like one). [4, 13]

This criticizes hypocrisy and pretentiousness—behaving grandly without being able to afford it.

4. "Чай – а Москву через него видать" (Tea so clear you can see Moscow through it). [2, 13]

5. "Такой чай, что Кронштадт видно" (Such tea that you can see Kronstadt through it). [4, 13]

These two highlight tea clarity as a quality measure. For Chinese, such metaphors may be alien, as their focus is on aroma and variety.

Uzbek proverbs with the lexeme “tea” demonstrate various connotative meanings:

1. Even if your place is poor, let your tea be strong. [2, 213]

This reflects Uzbek hospitality—it’s not about wealth but genuine care for guests.

2. The whip of palov is tea. [3, 359]

This metaphor indicates that tea is always served after palov, finalizing the meal.

3. Don’t give the last of the tea even to your father. [3, 364]

The last, over-steeped tea can be harmful—this is a caution based on health.

4. Tea spilling won’t make a stream;

Gathering stars won’t make a moon. [3, 414]

A moral teaching: no matter how many drops or stars, they won’t become a stream or a moon.

5. All tea is one side,

Shama tea is another. [3, 424]

Shama tea is highly valued in tradition—this expresses quality differences.

6. Undercooked meat isn’t edible,

Neither is unboiled tea drinkable. [3, 447]

Like food, tea must be properly prepared. A philosophical view on timing and readiness.

7. May the tea without cream and butter perish,

As should a rich man without charity. [3, 489]

Tea symbolizes generosity. Without richness or sweetness, it’s incomplete—like a stingy rich man.

8. Give the last of the tea to your friend. [3, 102]

Contrasting earlier proverbs, this one values sharing the best with friends. It expresses respect and true hospitality.

9. If you don’t have sweet tea,

Then have a sweet tongue. [3, 167]

Sweet words can substitute sweet offerings. This proverb elevates politeness and speech over material wealth—a core Uzbek value.

Conclusion:



Each proverb reflects the linguocultural and conceptual values of a nation, forming a distinct cultural space. These meanings are deeply tied to the lifestyle, behavior, and traditions of the people.

References:

- 1 . Abuzalova M.K , G.F. Ziyodullayeva. The reflection of the tea concept in the values of nations. European Journal of Innovation in Nonformal Education (EJINE). – 2025.-NO. 2. – p.247
2. Ma'nolar Maxzani – National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan, 2001. – p. 448
3. Uzbek Folk Proverbs. – Sharq, 2005. – p. 512
- 4 . Цзоу Сюецян . Лингвокультурная специфика концепта «чай» и ее учет в обучении русскому языку китайских студентов. - Sank -Peterburg , 2007. - p- 23