

**THE DIFFERENCES IN TERMS RELATED TO GASTRONOMY IN UZBEK AND
KARAKALPAK LANGUAGES**

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Abstract: This article provides a comprehensive comparative linguistic and ethnosemantic analysis of gastronomic terms within the Uzbek and Karakalpak languages. Belonging to separate branches of the Turkic language family—Uzbek to the Karluk (Southeastern) branch and Karakalpak to the Kipchak (Northwestern) branch—these two languages exhibit a profound genetic unity alongside sharp, historically conditioned lexical variations in their culinary vocabularies. This study investigates the complex ways in which historical trajectories, geopolitical shifts, ecological environments, and primary socio-economic lifestyles (sedentary oasis agriculture versus nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralism) have structured their respective food-related vocabularies. By classifying the gastronomic lexicon into distinct semantic fields—including traditional staple dishes, dairy and livestock derivatives, processing technologies, thermal cooking methods, and material kitchen culture—this paper maps specific phonetic, morphological, and semantic divergences. The findings indicate that while core Common Turkic roots remain resilient across both systems, Karakalpak preserves archaic Kipchak features, intense Kazakh-Nogai lexical affinities, and a unique deltaic fishing substrate. Conversely, the Uzbek gastronomic lexicon reflects widespread historical convergence with Persian (Tajik) and Arabic linguistic strata, embodying a classic urbanized Central Asian culinary tradition.

Keywords: Gastronomic Terminology, Uzbek Language, Karakalpak Language, Comparative Linguistics, Ethnosemantics, Turkic Dialectology, Culinary Culture.

INTRODUCTION.

Language serves as the primary repository of a nation's historical consciousness, material culture, and ecological adaptation. Within the broader scope of linguistics, the semantic field of gastronomy—encompassing the names of raw ingredients, processing methods, culinary tools, and finished dishes—is uniquely sensitive to external socio-economic shifts, geographical realities, and intercultural contacts. Food systems are not merely biological necessities; they are highly structured semiotic systems. Consequently, the terminology used to describe these systems acts as a linguistic mirror, reflecting the historical pathways of ethnic groups, their domestic arrangements, and their ancestral modes of production.

Within Turkic linguistics, contrastive studies between closely related yet structurally divergent languages offer fertile ground for understanding dialectal differentiation and ethnogenesis. The Republic of Uzbekistan presents an exceptional socio-linguistic landscape for such an inquiry, hosting both the Uzbek language (the state language) and the Karakalpak language (co-official in the Republic of Karakalpakstan). Although these speech communities have coexisted within the shared geographic macro-region of the Oxus basin for centuries, their underlying linguistic frameworks and historical lifestyles diverge significantly.

The structural variations observed in the gastronomic vocabularies of Uzbek and Karakalpak are fundamentally rooted in their genetic placement within the Turkic language family:

The Uzbek Language: Classified under the **Karluk (Southeastern)** branch of Turkic languages, modern literary Uzbek is largely based on the urban dialects of the Fergana Valley, Tashkent, and Samarkand. Historically, the evolution of the Karluk branch was profoundly shaped by the *Sart* culture—a socio-cultural reality defined by a sedentary, oasis-based

agricultural existence, highly developed urban craftsmanship, and intensive, centuries-long bilingualism with Iranian languages (specifically Tajik/Persian). This long-standing symbiotic relationship resulted in deep structural, phonetic, and lexical interpenetration, introducing a substantial Persianate and, by extension, Islamic Arabic vocabulary into the domestic sphere.

The Karakalpak Language: Classified under the **Kipchak (Northwestern)** branch, specifically within the Aralo-Caspian sub-group, Karakalpak shares an exceptionally high degree of mutual intelligibility and structural symmetry with Kazakh, Nogai, and Kyrgyz. The historical ethnogenesis of the Karakalpaks is tied to the nomadic and semi-nomadic confederations that traversed the Eurasian steppes and settled within the shifting delta of the Amudarya and the southern shores of the Aral Sea. Their ancestral economy relied heavily on extensive pastoralism (cattle, horse, and camel breeding), seasonal irrigation agriculture, and deltaic fishing. This lifestyle necessitated a vocabulary that prioritized livestock management, animal product processing, and mobile domestic utilities, while remaining largely insulated from the direct urban Persianization that characterized the Karluk zone.

This study systematically contrasts the gastronomic terminology of Uzbek and Karakalpak to elucidate the phonetic laws, morphological developments, and cultural-historical forces that generated their contemporary lexical differences. By evaluating these vocabularies through an ethnosemantic lens, this paper demonstrates how nomadic and sedentary material cultures encode their culinary worlds into distinct linguistic structures.

This study employs a qualitative, comparative-contrastive, and ethnosemantic linguistic research design. The structural divergence between the Karluk and Kipchak branches serves as the baseline framework, allowing for a systematic analysis of how phonetic shifts and lexical substrates manifest within a highly specialized semantic field. The investigation moves beyond simple lexical cataloging to examine the historical, ecological, and cultural factors that drove semantic shifts, direct borrowings, and the preservation of archaic terms.

The lexical data analyzed in this research was extracted from a broad corpus of authoritative lexicographical, ethnographic, and literary sources published in both languages. To ensure a structured contrastive analysis, the gathered gastronomic corpus was organized into four distinct fields:

1. **Meat, Dairy, and Traditional Staple Dishes:** Exploring terms for livestock derivatives, fermented beverages, and complex carbohydrate structures.
2. **Thermal and Mechanical Processing Technologies:** Analyzing verbs and action-oriented lexemes denoting cooking, baking, steaming, and roasting.
3. **Material Culture of the Kitchen (Utensils and Vessels):** Investigating the nomenclature of food preparation, containment, and communal consumption tools.
4. **Ecological and Fishing Substrates:** Examining specialized terms driven by specific habitats.

The lexical items were compared based on phonetic correspondence laws (e.g., vowel harmony, velar-bilabial consonant shifts), morphological structural patterns (infinitival formations, derivative suffixes), and etymological origins. The comparative linguistic mapping demonstrates that while the core vocabulary for baseline nourishment exhibits shared Turkic roots, extensive divergence occurs in specific nomenclature. These differences are systematic, adhering to well-documented phonetic shifts and revealing clear patterns of external cultural borrowing or internal preservation.

Fermented buttermilk beverage | *Ayron* | *Ayran* | Reflects the Karluk-Kipchak vowel correspondence. Uzbek features a rounded back vowel (o), whereas Karakalpak maintains the open unrounded. |

Strained, concentrated whey / sour curd | *Sizma* | *Súzbe* | Shared Turkic root (*syz-/súz-* meaning "to strain"). Uzbek uses the unrounded front/central vowel sequence with the *-ma*

deverbal noun suffix, while Karakalpak exhibits full vowel harmony with front rounded closed vowels (ú) and the Kipchak *-be* suffix. |

Fermented camel's milk | *Tuya suti* (Descriptive) / *Qimiz* (Broad) | *Shubat* | Uzbek lacks a dedicated monolexemic term for this specific beverage, employing a descriptive noun phrase (*tuya suti* - camel's milk). Karakalpak preserves the specific Kipchak lexeme *shubat*, an essential dietary element in desert pastoralism. |

Spherical dried sour milk curd cheese | *Qurt* | *Qurt* | Phonetically identical due to rigid preservation of the high back rounded vowel (u). However, semantic density and sub-typologies (e.g., *jas qurt*, *eski qurt*) are significantly more expansive in Karakalpak. |

Fried leavened dough puffs | *Bo'g'irsoq* | *Bawırsaq* | Illustrates a classic sound law: the intervocalic/postvocalic velar fricative (g') in Karluk Uzbek shifts systematically to the bilabial glide (w) in Kipchak Karakalpak (g' \rightarrow w). |

Traditional wheat flatbread | *Non* | *Nan* | Uzbek utilizes the Persian loanword *non* (originally *nān*), demonstrating total integration into the sedentary Irano-Turkic linguistic sphere. Karakalpak retains the ancient Common Turkic *nan* / *etmek* line, resisting the phonetic Persianization of the vowel. |

Cold, layered meat and noodle dish | *Norin* | *Turama* | Uzbek *norin* is a highly specific urban dish with historical Mongolic/Persian etymological ties. Karakalpak utilizes *turama*, a descriptive deverbal noun from *tura-* (to chop/mince finely), aligning with nomadic culinary processes. |

Phonetic and Morphophonemic Divergence Patterns

The structural differences between Uzbek and Karakalpak gastronomic terms are grounded in systematic phonetic mutations that define the Karluk and Kipchak historical phonologies. The most prominent sound law observed is the **Karluk Vowel Rounding** versus the **Kipchak Vowel**. In modern literary Uzbek, the historical long and short open back vowels (a) underwent a systematic shift toward a rounded, semi-closed state, phonetically realized as [ɤ] and orthographically represented as o. Karakalpak completely resisted this shift, preserving the broad, unrounded, low-back state. This phonological divergence is evident in foundational kitchen terms:

Another clear morphophonemic shift involves the **Intervocalic Velar-to-Bilabial Mutation**. In the evolution of Northwestern Kipchak idioms, historical velar or post-velar fricatives (g, g') situated between vowels or in post-vocalic positions weakened and shifted into bilabial glides or labio-dental semi-vowels (w, v). The Karluk branch retained the velar placement. When applied to culinary terms, this rule generates clear structural contrasts:

In the realm of morphology, the infinitival or nominalization suffixes diverge sharply. The Uzbek verbal system standardizes the suffix *-moq* for the abstract infinitive noun (e.g., *dimlamoq*, *pishirmoq*). Karakalpak truncates this formation, utilizing the pan-Kipchak vocalic/semi-vocalic suffix *-w* (e.g., *biqtırw*, *pisiriw*). This alters the rhythmical and morphotactic profile of culinary recipes and processing manuals written in the respective languages.

Ethnosemantic Stratification: Sedentary vs. Nomadic Lexical Substrates

Beyond phonology, the etymological stratification of these vocabularies provides a clear record of their differing cultural development. The Uzbek culinary lexicon is deeply integrated with the **Irano-Turkic Sedentary Substrate**. For over a millennium, Karluk Turkic speakers lived alongside Western and Eastern Iranian populations in urban oases, leading to a shared material culture. This lifestyle relied on permanent mud-brick and fired-brick architecture, complex canal irrigation, intensive orchard cultivation, and professional guilds.

As a result, major aspects of the Uzbek domestic domain were designated using Persian (Tajik)

loanwords. The word *non* (bread) replaced the older Turkic *etmek*. The focal point of the courtyard, the *tandır* (clay oven), bears an ancient non-Turkic name. Serving implements like *kafgir* (slotted spoon) and *lagan* (ceramic platter) are rooted in Persian craft traditions. Even the word for a liquid meal, *sho'rva* (soup), traces back to the Perso-Arabic matrix. This structural assimilation reflects a lifestyle deeply rooted in sedentary, urbanized food production. Karakalpak gastronomic terminology, by contrast, has largely resisted this Persianization. It retains an Archaic Kipchak Pastoral Substrate, which is highly specialized for managing livestock products on the move. Nomadic life required light, durable, and highly functional tools. This explains why a large presentation vessel is called a *tabaq* in Karakalpak; historically made of turned wood, a *tabaq* could withstand the rough transhumance movements across the Usturt plateau without cracking, unlike the fragile ceramic *lagan* of the Uzbek oasis cities.

Furthermore, the extreme specialization of dairy terms in Karakalpak highlights the historical importance of milk preservation in pastoral life. The existence of a distinct, uncompounded lexeme like *shubat* for fermented camel's milk stands in contrast to the Uzbek analytical construction *tuya suti*. Where the Uzbek speaker uses a descriptive modifier (animal name + milk noun), the

Similarly, the term *súzbe* in Karakalpak carries a precise structural value within a systematic chain of milk refinement steps (*sút* → *qatık* → *súzbe* → *qurt*), whereas the Uzbek *sizma*, though cognate, operates within an ecosystem that heavily features grains, cultivated legumes, and orchard fruits.

Ecological Adaptation and Linguistic Micro-Innovation. The geographical isolation of the Karakalpaks in the deltaic zone of the Aral Sea gave rise to a unique linguistic feature: a specialized Ichthyological Gastronomic Substrate. In standard literary Uzbek, which developed in landlocked agricultural valleys like Fergana and Tashkent, fish was historically a marginal, seasonal dietary element. Consequently, Uzbek descriptions of fish preparation are syntactically descriptive and structurally basic, typically relying on simple past-participle modifiers (e.g., *qovurilgan baliq*).

Karakalpak, however, elevates fish preparation to an independent culinary category, creating compound terms like *baliq qorırdaq*. By applying the root *qorırdaq*—which traditionally referred to a quick-fried hash of freshly slaughtered livestock meat—to fish, the Karakalpak language demonstrates a creative semantic shift. It adapts nomadic meat-processing concepts to an ecosystem.

The preservation of monosyllabic roots like *kak* (specifically denoting dehydrated, wind-cured fish strips) further underscores this close adaptation to the local environment. This term serves as a structural linguistic marker for an economic survival strategy tailored to the Aral delta, a feature completely absent from the core culinary vocabulary of the Karluk Uzbek dialects.

The comparative analysis of gastronomic terminology in the Uzbek and Karakalpak languages demonstrates how two related languages can diverge structurally along socio-cultural and ecological lines. While their shared Common Turkic base ensures mutual intelligibility in core vocabulary, their specialized culinary lexicons display distinct patterns of development:

1. **Uzbek gastronomic terminology** is defined by a Karluk phonetic profile featuring systematic back-vowel rounding. It contains a large layer of Persian and Arabic loanwords, reflecting a long history of sedentary, urbanized, and agricultural life in Central Asian oases.

2. **Karakalpak gastronomic terminology** maintains a Kipchak phonetic framework characterized by open unrounded vowels and distinct consonant mutations (g₁ → w). It preserves an ancient pastoral and nomadic vocabulary, closely linked with Kazakh and Nogai, alongside a highly specialized riverine fishing lexicon developed in the Aral Sea delta.

Ultimately, these food-related vocabularies are more than just lists of ingredients and tools. They

function as historical archives, preserving the records of environmental adaptation, migration, and cultural contact that have shaped the distinct identities of the Uzbek and Karakalpak peoples.

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