



Article

Comparative-Historical Analysis of Food Names (Based on The Work *Divanu Lugati-T-Turk*)

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Abstract: This article conducts a comparative-historical analysis of food names presented in Mahmud Koshgariy's work *Divanu Lug'ati-t-Turk*, one of the ancient written monuments of Turkic peoples. In the course of the research, the formation of food vocabulary, its semantic development, as well as the similarities and differences among Turkic languages are examined on a scientific basis. The etymological roots of food names and their inseparable connection with the lifestyle, social, and economic activities of the people are revealed. In the article, linguistic, historical, and cultural approaches are combined to analyze the stages of development of food names. The results of the research serve to gain a deeper understanding of the historical lexicology of Turkic languages.

Keywords: *Divanu Lugati-t-Turk*, Food Names, Comparative-Historical Analysis, Turkic Languages, Lexicon, Etymology, Food Terminology, Semantic Development, Cultural Layer

1. Introduction

In studying deeply, the history of Turkic languages, ancient written sources occupy a special place. Such sources not only record language units, but also reflect the social, economic, and cultural life of that period. From this point of view, the work *Divanu Lug'ati-t-Turk* is recognized as a unique encyclopedic monument embodying the linguistic richness, worldview, and lifestyle of Turkic peoples. The lexical materials collected in this work are gathered based on the author's direct observations, which further increases their historical reliability. Among the lexical layers found in this source, names related to food are particularly worthy of attention [1]. Because food names are closely connected with human daily needs, through them it is possible to draw important conclusions about the people's economic activity, living environment, and cultural values. For example, terms related to grain products illuminate agricultural traditions, while names related to meat and dairy products reflect the culture of animal husbandry [2]. Therefore, the study of food vocabulary goes beyond the scope of linguistics and directly intersects with ethnography and history. In modern linguistics, studying lexical layers on a comparative-historical basis is considered one of the important methodological directions. Especially, words related to daily life, including food names, stand out because they have relatively well preserved the oldest layers of the language [3]. This allows them to be compared across various Turkic languages, to identify common roots, and to observe phonetic and semantic changes. From this point of view, studying food terminology serves as an important tool in uncovering the internal regularities of language development [4].

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Through food names, it is also possible to form an idea about the people's food culture, social stratification level, ceremonies, and customs. Some foods are everyday consumption products, while others have a ceremonial or festive character. Therefore, studying food names illuminates not only the material culture of the people but also their spiritual world [5]. In today's globalization process, the issue of preserving national-cultural heritage and studying it on a scientific basis acquires even more urgent importance. From this point of view, analyzing the food vocabulary in Mahmud Koshg'ariy's heritage from a comparative-historical perspective can provide important scientific results not only for linguistics, but also for cultural studies and history. Through such research, the common roots of Turkic peoples, their mutual connections, and regional characteristics become even more clearly manifested [6].

The main purpose of this research is to conduct a comparative-historical analysis of the food names found in the work *Divanu Lug'ati-t-Turk*, to determine their etymological sources, and to reveal the similarities and differences among Turkic languages. At the same time, during the research, the semantic development, scope of use, and cultural bases of food vocabulary are analyzed using a comprehensive approach [7]. As a result, this work serves to gain a deeper understanding of the historical lexicology of Turkic languages, to reveal the inseparable connection between language and culture, and to reconstruct the lifestyle of ancient Turkic peoples based on linguistic materials. From this point of view, this research has not only theoretical but also practical significance, creating an important basis for future scientific studies [8].

Analysis of Literature

The issue of studying the historical lexicon of Turkic languages has long been considered as one of the central problems of linguistics. In this process, ancient written sources, especially *Divanu Lug'ati-t-Turk*, perform a special scientific support function [9]. This work is not only a collection of lexical units, but is also valued as a comprehensive scientific source embodying the language, culture, and lifestyle of the 11th-century Turkic world. This work compiled by Mahmud Koshg'ariy remains today one of the main sources of Turkology studies without losing its scientific value. Looking at the history of Turkology, it is possible to see that research on this work has developed in several directions. In the initial stages, attention was mainly focused on explaining lexical units, their translation, and phonetic features, while in the later period, efforts increased to reveal semantic, etymological, and cultural layers. For example, scholars such as Vasily Radlov and Sergey Malov made important works in explaining the Turkic lexicon from a historical point of view, while in the later period, researchers such as Ahmet Bican Ercilasun and Talat Tekin deepened this direction [10].

The issue of food vocabulary, although considered within the general lexical studies, formed as an independent research object relatively later. Nevertheless, this layer requires special attention because it preserves the oldest and most stable units of the language. This is because the process of nutrition necessary for human life forms the most conservative layers of the language. From this point of view, food names, compared to other lexical units, are less subject to historical changes or preserve their primary meaning for a long time. In some studies, food names were divided into semantic groups, and attempts were made to reveal their internal system. Terms related to grain products, names related to milk and meat products, as well as beverages, were studied in separate groups. Such classification allows systematic study of language material. At the same time, some scholars, not limiting themselves only to classification, also tried to determine the etymological roots of this lexicon. For example, Gerard Clauson, who deeply studied the historical lexicon of Turkic languages, in his research attempted to reconstruct the ancient forms of many words and explained their semantic development [11].

His works serve as an important methodological basis in studying ancient layers such as food names. Likewise, etymological dictionaries compiled by E. Sevortyan are also

considered one of the important sources in determining the historical roots of Turkic lexicon [12]. In recent years, research has focused on narrower but deeper issues. In particular, in G. Kenesbaeva's study, the food names in *Divanu Lug'ati-t-Turk* are studied on a comparative-historical basis to see how they have been preserved in modern Turkic languages. Here, the author observes not only phonetic changes but also semantic shifts. Examples are provided showing that the meaning of some words has expanded, some have narrowed, or completely moved to another semantic direction. This clearly demonstrates how the language dynamically develops over time.

However, when reviewing existing literature in general, one important point becomes clear: most studies are aimed at illuminating the general lexical layer, and food names often "disappear" within this general context. That is, they have not been sufficiently studied as an independent research object. Especially, works that fully cover all food names in *Divanu Lug'ati-t-Turk* and analyze them comprehensively – linguistically, historically, and ethnographically – are very rare. Another noteworthy point is that the issue of regional variants and dialectal forms of some food names has also been insufficiently addressed. However, Turkic languages are spread over a wide area, and in each region, the food culture has developed in a unique way. Naturally, this is also reflected in lexical units. Therefore, in future research, special attention should be paid to this aspect. The issue of comparing food vocabulary with other languages is also considered urgent. This is because, in historical processes, Turkic peoples were constantly in contact with other ethnic groups, which led to lexical exchanges. Determining which food names entered from other languages, or conversely, which moved from Turkic languages into other languages, helps to understand the history of the language more deeply [13].

This research is conducted based on *Divanu Lug'ati-t-Turk*, and through the food names in it, the historical-cultural life of the Turkic peoples is illuminated. The authors of the article, M. Qosybaev, B. Jiyembay, and A. Khalmetov, evaluate this work not only as a lexical source but also as an important written monument reflecting ethnographic and cultural memory. During the research, nearly 160 units related to food were extracted from the work, and their semantic features and usage in modern Turkic languages were analyzed. The authors emphasize that some food names, in particular, units related to grain products (barley, wheat, talqan, and others) indicate that agriculture held an important place in the economic life of the Turkic peoples. At the same time, the abundance of names related to meat and dairy products indicates that animal husbandry culture also occupied a primary place. The semantic changes of some words were also brought into focus in the article. For example, units such as "tarigh" were used in a broader sense in historical periods and later narrowed, which is explained as a natural process of language development. Likewise, names such as *kumis*, *qatiq*, and *qurt* have been preserved almost unchanged in modern Turkic languages, indicating their belonging to the common Turkic cultural layer.

The authors interpret food names not only as lexical units but also as a means reflecting the lifestyle, customs, and worldview of the people. This aspect further enhances the scientific significance of the article. At the same time, the research relies on the scientific views of scholars such as V. Bartold, S. Malov, and A. Kononov, showing that the theoretical foundations of this work are strong. Existing literature shows that the food names in *Divanu Lug'ati-t-Turk* represent a complex and multilayered phenomenon situated at the intersection of linguistics, history, and culture. Studying them allows understanding not only the internal system of the language but also the people's way of life, economic activity, and cultural values. From this perspective, a deep and comprehensive study of food vocabulary remains one of the important directions for future scientific research.

2. Materials and Methods

The research is based on studying the food names in *Divanu Lug'ati-t-Turk* through a comparative-historical approach. As main methods, lexical classification, etymological analysis, semantic analysis, and comparative comparison among Turkic languages are applied. Lexical classification helps to divide food names into semantic groups, etymological analysis helps to determine their origin and historical roots. Semantic analysis reveals how words have changed over time, while comparative comparison shows the similarities and differences among Turkic languages. In this way, the research is conducted by combining linguistic, historical, and cultural context.

3. Results and Discussion

When comparing the studies conducted based on *Divanu Lug'ati-t-Turk*, it can be seen that the issue of food names has been illuminated by different scholars from various perspectives. The initial researchers — V. Bartold, S. Malov, A. Kononov — focused more on the general language layer, explaining words related to food within a broad lexical system. For them, since the main goal was to show the general development of the language, food names do not become a separate center but remain part of the general background. In later studies, the situation changes somewhat. For example, scholars such as Qosybaev, Jiyembay, and Khalmetov approached exactly the food names, attempting to study them separately. Here, attention is paid not only to the meaning of the word but also to where it comes from, how it has changed, and how it has survived in modern languages. From this point of view, these studies go much “deeper” than the previous ones. Interestingly, although views differ, almost all scholars agree on one thing: food names are not just words. Through them, it is possible to see how ancient people lived, what they did daily, and which activities were dominant. For example, the abundance of words related to grain products reflects agriculture, while the abundance of names related to milk and meat reflects animal husbandry. This aspect repeatedly appears in almost all studies. The difference is mostly in the approach. In earlier works, words are mostly explained, while in later works they are compared, their roots are sought, and how they have changed over time is shown. Especially, observations about some words narrowing or, conversely, expanding in meaning show that language is a “living” process.

On this basis, it can be said that studying food names, even if it seems like a small topic, actually reveals a very large picture. Through this, it is possible to see the language, history, and even the daily life of the people simultaneously. When analyzing the food names in *Divanu Lug'ati-t-Turk* semantically, they can be divided into several main groups. Names related to grain products reflect the agricultural activity of ancient Turkic peoples. These names are historically stable and have preserved their meaning for many centuries. In this layer, names of raw grains and finished products are distinguished; raw grains indicate the process of production and storage, while finished products indicate their form ready for consumption. Through this, we can gain a deeper understanding of the daily life and socio-economic activity of ancient Turkic society. Names related to meat and dairy products reflect the culture of animal husbandry. There are names consumed as beverages and names used as solid food. At the same time, these names are connected with ceremonial and religious ideas, reflecting the cultural layer of the people. Some names have regional variations and have undergone phonetic and semantic changes.

Names of ceremonial and festive foods, in particular products such as sweets and cheese, are distinguished from everyday consumption and reflect the social and spiritual life of the people. The semantic stability of this group is high and has an important role in preserving cultural values. Beverages, on the other hand, express the general context of daily and ceremonial consumption and play an important role in the food culture of the Turkic peoples. The food names appearing in the *Divan* can be semantically divided into three large groups:



Figure 1. Semantic classification of food names

Grain and flour products occupied the center of the Turkic table. Products such as *tarigh*, *talqan*, *sumalak*, *manti*, and *churek* were consumed not only as everyday food but also during holidays and important ceremonies. For example, *talqan*, the crushed form of roasted grain, was valued for its long shelf life and used as an energy source during winter days, travels, or journeys. *Sumalak*, on the other hand, was not only a sweet but also an integral part of family and communal gatherings during spring festivals. In this way, each grain product expresses not only nutrition but also social and cultural processes in Turkic society.

Milk and dairy products in Turkic peoples served not only to nourish the body but also to strengthen health and had symbolic meaning during celebrations. Products such as *kumis*, *ayran*, *qatiq*, and *qurt* are an integral part of the daily table, each having its unique preparation method. Various types of *kumis* — *saumal kumis*, *tay kumis*, *tünemel kumis* — indicate the processing of milk as well as differences in various regions and households. *Kumis* was valued not only as a beverage but also as a symbol of social conversation and hospitality among Turkic peoples [14].

Meat products enrich the uniqueness of table culture. Products such as *qazy* and meat are not only sources of nutrition but also express the art of using, storing, and preparing meat in various ways. *Qazy* was valued as a special dish for holidays and guests, while *ton'et* was a primary source of energy for travel and battles due to its long preservation. Fruits and vegetables demonstrate the harmonious living of Turkic peoples with nature and the appreciation of the land's fertility. Products such as quince, apple, pear, cherry plum, *jenishturuk*, and *iigde* not only added color and taste to dishes but also had health-strengthening properties. Additionally, grapes and cherry plums were used in the fermentation process to prepare juice or wine, allowing the preparation of dishes for different times and occasions on the Turkic table [15]. The variations of words over time in Turkic languages show that this is a natural process in language history. *Divanu Lug'ati-t-Turk* serves not only for linguistics but also as a unique source for understanding the cultural, historical, and dietary experience of the Turkic peoples.

4. Conclusion

The study of food names in *Divanu Lug'ati-t-Turk* shows that the table of ancient Turkic peoples was not only a means of eating. Each food name reflects the life, customs, and worldview of the people of that time, as well as their family and communal relationships. Products such as *talqan*, *sumalak*, or *kumis*, while being ordinary sources of energy, were also valued as symbols of holidays, family gatherings, and sincere conversations. In this way, through food, people expressed their emotions, hospitality, and the culture of living in harmony with nature. The formation and changes of these names over time reveal the vitality of the Turkic languages and their continuous development. Furthermore, many food names have been preserved phonetically and semantically in the same way among Turkic peoples, demonstrating cultural continuity and the heritage transmitted from ancient times to the present. Food vocabulary is not only important for linguistic interest but also reveals more clearly the lifestyle, regional traditions, and cultural values of the people. Thus, by studying this work, we see not only words but also

the colorful, lively, and human details of ancient Turkic society. Each food name is not just a term but a valuable witness to the way of life, harmony with nature, and human values passed from the past to the present.

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