

CULTURAL VALUES REFLECTED IN FOOD PROVERBS

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Cultural values play a significant role in society as they determine what actions are best to do. In the English, Russian and Uzbek languages, there are many food-related proverbs which have rich cultural values that have been transferred for generations in the society for centuries. This chapter identifies and interprets the cultural values embedded in the food proverbs.

In order to gain a better understanding of the cultural values reflected in food proverbs in English, Russian and Uzbek languages, we have analyzed food proverbs that were specially chosen for this research work. The analysis have revealed that the proverbs in all three languages expressed similar values related to food, such as the importance of sharing food with others, the need to be mindful of the resources available, and the idea of moderation when it comes to consuming food. In addition, the proverbs in the three languages also expressed values relating to hospitality, respect for authority, and the virtues of hard work and perseverance. The English proverbs focused more on the idea of moderation, while the Russian and Uzbek proverbs focused more on the importance of hospitality and respect for authority. Overall, the analysis revealed that food proverbs in English, Russian and Uzbek languages express similar cultural values related to food, hospitality, respect for authority, and the virtues of hard work and perseverance. These values are seen as important in all three cultures and are reflected in the proverbs that are used to convey these values.

The proverbs were also used to express negative values and beliefs, such as the dangers of gluttony and the need to avoid wasteful eating. The analysis also revealed some cultural differences in the use of food proverbs. In particular, the English proverbs tended to emphasise the importance of moderation and the need to avoid gluttony, whereas the Russian and Uzbek proverbs tended to focus more on the importance of sharing food and hospitality. Furthermore, the English proverbs tended to emphasise the importance of eating a balanced diet, whereas the Russian and Uzbek proverbs tended to focus more on the need to avoid wasteful eating.

The proverbs were found to be deeply rooted in the culture of each language, with the majority of proverbs being specific to the culture and language of origin. The study also revealed that food proverbs have a strong cultural significance, with each proverb

conveying a unique message about the culture's values and beliefs. For example, the proverb 'A full belly makes a happy heart' conveys the importance of food and hospitality in Russian culture, while the proverb 'A hungry man is an angry man' conveys the idea that hunger can lead to negative emotions. Additionally, the proverb 'The way to a man's heart is through his stomach' conveys the idea that food can be used to show love and affection. The study also found that food proverbs are used to convey a variety of messages about the relationship between food and health. For example, the proverb 'Too much of anything is bad' conveys the idea that moderation is important when it comes to food, while the proverb 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away' conveys the idea that eating healthy food can help to prevent illness.

Brosh (2013: 2) explains:

"Understanding the foreign culture and developing intercultural competence comes from a variety of sources such as one's own cultural background, religion and life experience, media and especially language textbooks and school. In the classroom a wide range of educational techniques and practical strategies are available for the language instructor to lay the foundation for students to develop intercultural competence"¹

Proverbs can be used as a means to give the learners better understanding as the language is learnt through cultural approach with morals to learn. Adnan Zaid (2016: 2) explains:

"Proverbs contain a truth in few words that relate to everyday life having a universal value, and they can be remembered easily. Considering the good values of proverbs, a teacher may use proverbs to teach English as a foreign language as a lead-in activity prior to teaching language skills. It is a good way to consolidate the learning of vocabulary, grammar, sentence patterns, moral values, and the like"²

The results reveal eight cultural values embedded in food-related proverbs: trustworthiness, consistency, usefulness, patience, diligence, discipline, responsibility, and gratefulness. The cultural values emanating from the proverbs are crucial for shaping people's personal and cultural identities. This study concludes that the food-related proverbs in the English, Russian and Uzbek languages have many positive cultural values essential for life that need to be incorporated into the school curricula to make students competent in understanding and using them in and for their lives.

People also connect to their cultural or ethnic group through food patterns. Food is often used as a means of retaining their cultural identity. People from different

¹ Brosh, Hezi. 2013. Proverbs in the Arabic Language Classroom. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 3(5): 2-3. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265421984_Proverbs_in_the_Arabic_language_classroom

² Zaid, Adnan. 2016. Using Proverbs as a Lead-in Activity in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*. 4(10), 2. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.20431/2347-3134.0410001>.

cultural backgrounds eat different foods. The areas in which families live and where their ancestors originated influence food like and dislikes. These food preferences result in patterns of food choices within a cultural or regional group.

In religion, food is one of the most important parts of religious ceremonies. The role of food in religious culture is an important part of showing respect among their communities and many of these religions obey the religious commandments, hence food is prepared in different ways. The meaning of food is an exploration of culture through food. What we consume, how we acquire it, who prepares it, who's at the table, and who eats first is a form of communication that is, it has a rich cultural base. Beyond merely nourishing the body, what we eat and with whom we eat can inspire and strengthen the bonds between individuals, communities, and even countries. There is no closer relationship than the one with the family and food plays a large part in defining family roles, rules, and traditions. It helps us to discover attitudes, practices, and rituals surrounding food, it sheds light on our most basic beliefs about ourselves and others. There is a relationship between culture and food. This negotiates our identities, cultures and environments.

Food is seen more than just a means of survival. Food is considered to be multidimensional, as something that shapes us, our identities, and our cultures and in the end, our society. Just as different clothes signify different things example the white coat a doctor, the uniform of a police officer or army personnel, food also transmits a meaning. But the meaning varies from culture to culture. For example: tomato, basil and mozzarella cheese on a pizza signify a taste of Italy. In addition, various food tropes are used in everyday life: Many scholars have analyzed the relationships between food, identity and communication.

The meaning of food is an exploration of culture through food. What we consume, how we acquire it, who prepares it, who's at the table, and who eats first is a form of communication that is, it has a rich cultural base. For instance, in Uzbek culture when the food is ready, the elderly people of the family should start eating the food first. It is considered to be impolite for the young of the family to start the food before their grandparents or parents.

In addition to impacting food choices, culture also plays a role in food-related etiquette. People in Western societies may refer to food-related etiquette as table manners, a phrase that illustrates the cultural expectation of eating food or meals at a table. Some people eat with forks and spoons; more people use fingers or chopsticks. However, utensil choice is much more complicated than choosing chopsticks, fingers, or flatware. Among some groups who primarily eat food with their fingers, diners use only the right hand to eat. Some people use only three fingers of the right hand. In some

countries such as in Southeast Asia, licking the fingers and eating with fingers is polite; there is a conception of eating with your hands as a way to connect with the food and improve the consciousness of eating, therefore benefiting digestion and increasing enjoyment. Furthermore, according to Islam, finger-licking after a meal is not a dirty or shameful act, as the Prophet engaged in the act, and it is said that the blessing of the food may be in every aspect of it. Thus, wiping one's fingers may prevent one from enjoying the gift. This is considered to be extremely impolite in other cultures. Rules regarding polite eating may increase in formal settings. At some formal dinners, a person might be expected to choose the right fork from among two or three choices to match the food being eaten at a certain point in the meal.

Food plays an important role in the lives of families in most cultures. However, the degree of importance varies from culture to culture. In many families, activities and ceremonies center on cooking and eating habits. A host family demonstrates its prosperity or societal rank by providing large quantities of food. Among other families in other locations, activities and celebrations include food, but food is not necessarily the center of the event. Food traditions vary widely throughout the world. Even among people who share similar cultural backgrounds and some of the same food habits, eating patterns are not identical. Further, families vary from their own daily routines on holidays, when traveling, or when guests are present. Men eat differently from women. People of different age groups eat differently. However, in most parts of the world, food is associated with hospitality and expression of friendship. Therefore, sensitivity to food rules and customs is important in building and strengthening cross-cultural relationships.

After analyzing food proverbs, this study has identified the following cultural values:

Hard work: He that will not work shall not eat - Ishlamagan tishlamas, Ishyoqmasga kun kulmas - Кто не работает, тот не ест

Truthworthiness: In wine, there is truth - Mastlik rostlik - Что у трезвого на уме, то у пьяного на языке

Wastefulness: Wine and wenches empty mens purses - Maishatga kop berilma jamiyatdan orqada qolasan - Гулянки да пирушки оставят без полушки

Ability: If you can't bite never show your teeth – Qo'ling ko'tara olmasa, choqmorni boshingga boylama - Не умеешь шить-не пори

Pointlessness: It is no good crying over spilt milk - O'tgan gapga o'kinma - Слезами горю не поможешь

Hunger: Hunger breaks stone walls - Och o'zini o'tga urar - Голод не тётка

Difficulties: Honey is sweet but the bee stings - Bol bor yerda bolari bor - Где пчёлы, там и мёд

Friendship: Before you choose a friend eat a bushel of salt with him. - Do'st safarda bilinar. - Изведан друг, куль соли вместе съевши

Kinship: Blood is thicker than water. - Urug' aymog'im, quyuq qaumog'im. - Свой своему поневоле брат

Warning: The rotten apple injures its neighbors - Tirroqi buzoq podani bulg'ar - От одного порученного яблока целый воз загнивает