

TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS AS MEANS OF FORMATION OF EATING BEHAVIOR OF TATAR PEOPLE

Fanuza Haydarovna Gabdrakhmanova, Madina Rashidovna Sattarova,
Raushaniya Sagdatzyanovna Nurmukhametova

Kazan Federal University, 420008, Kazan, Kremlevskaya Street, 18 (RUSSIA)

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ABSTRACT

At the present stage under the influence of globalization language studies and their relation with the phenomenon of national culture is becoming the subject of increasing interest. Languages are able to influence the process of formation and development of a national culture; language learning is impossible without culture studies. The national culture as a phenomenon is multivariate, and this characteristic gives rise to a wide range of possible approaches to its study. The reflection of material and spiritual cultural values in languages, identification of their common grounds are becoming more and more significant for researchers in the context of such relevant problems as preservation and development of national languages and cultures.

The national culture was under the influence of many internal and external factors, such as traditions, customs and religion. The authors of the article aimed to examine the thematic group of material culture vocabulary – names of national dishes, as these lexical units are associated with the eating behavior of Tatars. The aspects of family upbringing, existing traditions, values and national ideas about food, religion, fashion and etc. play an important role in formation of their eating behavior. The study of these lexical units and their relation with the spiritual culture leads to the conclusion that traditions and religion had a significant impact on the national cuisine of Muslim Tatars, their diet and eating habits. The topic of the study is determined by the needs of contemporary linguistics in studying the essential characteristics of material and spiritual culture formation.

Key words: Tatar language, material culture, spiritual culture, eating behavior, food, religion, traditions, customs

1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary linguistics language peculiarities and specific characteristics of lexical units functioning are considered as means to describe the linguistic individuality and a factor that determines the peculiarities of formation and development of the collective and individual outlook. This trend is related to the fact that a human being is in the centre of attention. In the context of globalization the members of the modern society tend to learn the language in relation to the phenomenon of the national culture. It is well-known that vocabulary is one of the most important levels of the language system: it preserves the ethno-cultural specific characteristics and transfers them from generation to generation. Therefore, cultural linguistics is mostly focused on the study of vocabulary that carries information on the peculiarities of national perception.

Human activity is closely associated with certain actions, events, and one of them is eating behavior. Being the significant factor of life food takes a special place in spiritual and material culture of people. In a diverse and multi-dimensional vocabulary of Tatar language there is a special group of lexical units - a culinary vocabulary, which is able to expand the knowledge about the people and generate the interest in their culture. Those lexical units that are connected with eating culture – such as the names of traditional dishes, tableware and glassware have more national characteristics than other daily goods; they preserve traditional features and are mostly associated with the national identity of people. Despite the fact that the vocabulary of Tatar language is the object of multiple studies, their separate aspects and thematic groups, including culinary vocabulary as a part of spiritual and material culture, have not been properly studied. So, the present study is focused on those lexical units that indicate the specific characteristics of the national cuisine which reflects the history, life and customs of the people.

The objective of the research

The research is aimed at the analysis of the major thematic groups of lexical units associated with eating habits of Muslim Tatars and the external factors that have influence on formation and functioning of the thematic vocabulary. In accordance with the objective of the research the authors supposed to identify the range of social factors that influenced the process of formation of Tatar culinary vocabulary, to define the role and place of religious outlook on eating behavior of the people, to describe the external factors that had an impact on eating traditions.

Methodological framework

The methodological basis of the research is represented by a combination of general scientific and private linguistic methods. The system and structural approach predominates over the others as it allows us to identify the mechanisms of formation and functioning of the culinary vocabulary in Tatar language. The historical approach implemented in the study gives an opportunity to represent the development of both individual lexical units and thematic lexical groups. The descriptive method was applied to collect and systemize the materials of the study. The detailed and comprehensive analysis of lexical materials was carried out on the basis of the lexical and semantic method. The comparative analysis helped to study loan words. The culinary vocabulary of Tatar language is considered as a single historic and cultural phenomenon. For the purpose of the research this vocabulary has been studied with regard to its chronological, cultural and historical, ethno-social belonging and its interrelationship with the concept of "food". The selected methods are considered as the most suitable ones. The scientific basis of the study is represented by the number of lexicographic sources, namely the dictionaries of Tatar language dated as the XIX-XX centuries.

2. RESULTS

In Tatar linguistics there are studies devoted to the description of individual lexical units and groups. Some levels of Tatar language (such as terminology, onomastics, phraseology, dialectology and etc.) are also properly studied. In recent years researchers paid more attention to the study of material and spiritual culture, ethno-cultural lexical units of Tatar language, lexical peculiarities of dialects in Tatar diasporas, religious lexical units. The culinary vocabulary of Tatar language has been described in scientific literature to a certain extent; some of the lexical units are fixed in a number of dictionaries [Zamaletdinov R.R., Nurmukhametova R.S. 2012; Yusupova A.Sh. et.al 2014; Sibgaeva F.R. 2014; Zamaletdinov R.R. et.al, 2014; Sibgaeva, F.R., et.al 2015; Mukhametzyanova L., Shayakhmetova L. 2014; Nurmukhametova R.S., et.al 2014; Zamaletdinov R.R. et.al, 2014]. The rich material on the basis of the dictionaries of the XIX century has been analyzed and evaluated by A.Sh. Yusupova [Yusupova 2008].

Despite the fact that a number of studies devoted to the problem has been mentioned above, the present study is also relevant as its authors consider the culinary vocabulary of Tatar language on the basis of environmental factors, such as religious beliefs, that have influenced the eating behavior of the people.

Religion as a part of social life is reflected in the national cuisine, it influences the national diet and eating customs. Muslim Tatars usually eat beef, horse-flesh, mutton, poultry that was slaughtered in accordance with the canons of Islam. Islam prohibits eating pork, flesh of predators and etc. [Nurmukhametova 2014]. In the context of the detailed analysis of the food preferences of Tatar Muslims the significance of "*halal*" concept can be identified (*halal* – permissible). *Halal* food is the only type of food that is allowed to eat according to Shariah and Islamic laws. The concept of "*halal*" primarily refers to meat dishes – the meat of animals permitted by Quran, slaughtered for the sake of Allah. Tatar people always had meat dishes; therefore, they completely perceived this requirement with adoption of Islam. Some favorite Tatar meat dishes are *azu*, *kzylyk* (jerked sausage), *katlama* (a meat loaf), *kzydyrma* (roast meat), *tutyrgan tavyk* (stuffed chicken), *tutyрма* (home-made liver sausage), *ochpochmak* (three-cornered patty), *peremyach* and etc. In general, *halal* food is materially and spiritually clean food that does not contain any harmful ingredients. Primarily it ensures the safety of human health.

The opposite to permitted food is "*haram*" (unpermitted) which in Tatar language can be explained by such lexical units as *dungyzite* – *pork and also the meat of animals killed by electrical current or suffocation, dead flesh, blood, ductless glands, gall-bladder, urinary bladder, the meat of predators and dishes made from them*. Based on these lexical units it should be noted that for Muslim Tatars eating behavior is primarily associated with the concepts of "*halal*" and "*haram*".

It is important to pay attention to another food group which is seafood. Since the majority of residential areas of Tatars are located by water basins Tatar language also includes such lexical units as *alabuga* (perch), *balyk* (fish), *djaen* (cat-fish), *kara balyk* (tench), *korban balyk* (bream), *kzyyl kanat* (rudd), *kyrpy balyk* (white sturgeon), *opty* (ide), *soleyman balyk* (salmon), *tabanbalyk* (carp), *tashbash* (gudgeon), *chabak* (roach), *churtan* (pike), *choge* (starlet), *shyrtlaka* (ruff) and etc. With development of the cross-cultural communication Tatar language was complemented with such words as *ivasi* (iwashi), *kalmar* (calamari), *kambala* (flat-fish), *krevetka* (shrimp), *makrel* (mackerel), *skumbriya* (scomber), *tunets* (tuna), *forel* (trout) and etc. The existence of these lexical units in Tatar language can be explained by the fact that Islam does not prohibit to eat seafood. However, it is questionable if it is permitted to eat the meat of crocodiles, otters, tortoises, fish and marine animals which can be dangerous for human life and health, toxic marine plants. It should be noted that people have some beliefs concerning the prohibition to eat seafood and meat of some marine animals which, to our opinion, is a superstition inherited from the pre-Islamic era. For example, you can hear a version that Islam prohibits to eat rabbit or pike, but in reality Islam denies that.

When identifying the national diet of Tatars it is necessary to mention the lexical unit "*uraza*" which is a fast during the month of Ramadan. Properly speaking, *uraza* is a ritual, when Muslims express their devotion and faithfulness to Allah by refraining from food, drinks, physical needs and desires during the daylight time. Fasting has a deep spiritual meaning; however, it is primarily associated with food restrictions. During the month of Ramadan people eat in the morning before the sunrise, and after the sunset it is better to drink more

water and eat light meals. The compliance with certain rules by Muslim Tatars indicates their connection with Islam. Religious canons have always had a significant impact on the eating behavior of Tatars.

The other concept, which is closely related to fasting, is “*gaet*” meaning “a feast”. Muslim Tatars associate *gaet* with preparation of certain traditional dishes. According to the canons of Islam there are two significant feasts – “*uraza gaete*” (the celebration after the end of *uraza*) and “*korban gaete*” (the feast of sacrifice). Both on the last day of Ramadan and on the first day of the feast of sacrifice the major dish is *gaetkoy magy* - traditional pancakes. This dish is a minimum that every woman must cook.

It is important to remember that all religious rituals and feasts are celebrated in accordance with the lunar calendar. Consequently the date is changed for 10-11 days every year. That's why the fasting period is shifting, and the weather conditions during Muslim fasts are always different. This fact has changed eating preferences both during the fast and on ordinary days.

Religion has also changed some of the traditional ceremonies. The most popular of them are *nikah* and *the ceremony of name giving*, etc. *Nikah* is a marriage in accordance with Shariah law, it is held at the bride's house at the expense of her parents. As a rule the main guests are parents, grandparents and close relatives of the couple. Families exchange gifts. As a gift people usually present money, tableware, glassware, clothes, sweets and etc. It is required to cook a pair of dried or baked *geese* and a large portion of *chak-chak*. During the ceremonies people do not drink alcohol. It is connected with the fact that alcohol is prohibited by the religion, but also the birth of a new family must not be associated with anything harmful for health and relationships as *nikah* is considered as the start of waiting for a baby who will become the successor of the family. All food must be *halal* and very diverse. After all appropriate prayers and admonitions a newly-married couple get *bal-may* (honey and butter) as a symbol of sweet and smooth life and prosperity.

The Tatar ceremony of name giving (*isem kushu*) is also closely associated with the canons of Islam. The choice of name, preparation of food and selection of gifts are the main elements of celebration. For the ceremony people usually cook *tokmach* (home-made noodle soup), boiled potatoes, *belesh* (pies with meat or sweet filling). In comparison, we see that for the ceremony of name giving people prepare everyday dishes; they do not usually prepare sweets. In our opinion the selection of traditional dishes for the ceremony of name giving is mainly focused on the child's mother whose main mission is to feed the child and recuperate. Hence we can conclude that Muslim Tatars developed their food culture by combining traditional food in their daily life in order to fulfill all the requirements of their religion.

3. CONCLUSION

It should be noted that Tatar cuisine has been influenced by the oriental countries, Europe, the culture of the peoples of Russia that can be proved by the appearance of new lexical units in the corresponding thematic group. However, the traditional dishes existent for centuries are still original; they help to guard the national health, and being an example of healthy diet they are able to repel the negative effects of environment.

4. SUMMARY

As social phenomena religion, traditions and customs become the major factors of various social processes, including eating behavior. The strengthening of their role coincides with the appearance of new social relations and the origination of new spiritual values. They become the stabilizer when traditional values are gone; facilitate the search for other ways to achieve civic accord and piece.

Thus, food is one of the most significant forms of interrelation of material and spiritual culture of the people. Religious ideas, canons and rituals have found their niche in eating behavior and are considered as important conditions for selection of products and national dishes, methods of their preparation and daily meals.

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