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**Oksana Soshko,**Candidate of Philology, Associate Professor of the Department of Foreign Philology and Translation,  
State University of Trade and Economics**ANTHROPOCENTRIC POTENTIAL OF GASTRONOMIC PHRASEOLOGY  
(WITH REFERENCE TO UKRAINIAN AND ENGLISH)**

The article presents a comparative analysis of phraseological units with a gastronomic component in Ukrainian and English within the framework of the anthropocentric paradigm. The study is based on the principles of cognitive linguistics, particularly the theory of conceptual metaphor, and a linguocultural approach, which makes it possible to interpret gastronomic imagery as a source for conceptualizing human physical, emotional, intellectual, and moral characteristics. The relevance of the study is determined by the anthropocentric paradigm of modern linguistics and the need for a deeper investigation of cognitive mechanisms of metaphorization in the phraseological system of language.

The investigation applies descriptive, semantic-cognitive, componential, linguocultural, and comparative methods to systematize and interpret phraseological units recorded in modern phraseographic sources. Four main subgroups are identified, representing physical characteristics, emotional and psychological states, intellectual abilities, and moral and ethical characteristics of a person. The analysis reveals several basic cognitive models common to both languages, including HUMAN APPEARANCE = FOOD PROPERTIES, EMOTIONAL STATE = TASTE / FOOD SITUATION, THINKING = COOKING, and MORALITY = FOOD RESOURCE ECONOMY.

At the same time, the study demonstrates national and cultural specificity in the realization of these models. Ukrainian phraseology tends to emphasize the introspective representation of internal states and socio-ethical balance (bread as a symbol of labor, justice, and reciprocity), whereas English phraseology more frequently highlights situationality, the degree of completion of processes, and the categories of responsibility and loyalty. The findings confirm that gastronomic phraseological units function as an integral system of anthropocentric conceptualization, transforming bodily experience into a cognitive tool for interpreting the physical, psychological, intellectual, and moral-ethical dimensions of human existence.

**Keywords:** phraseological unit/phraseologism/phraseme; gastronomic component; anthropocentrism; cognitive metaphor; conceptualization; axiological semantics; comparative analysis; linguistic picture of the world.

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**АНТРОПОЦЕНТРИЧНИЙ ПОТЕНЦІАЛ ГАСТРОНОМІЧНОЇ ФРАЗЕОЛОГІЇ  
(НА МАТЕРІАЛІ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ТА АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВ)**

Стаття присвячена порівняльному аналізу фразеологічних одиниць із гастрономічним компонентом в українській та англійській мовах у межах антропоцентричної парадигми. Дослідження ґрунтується на положеннях когнітивної лінгвістики, зокрема теорії концептуальної метафори та лінгвокультурологічному підході, що дозволяє розглядати гастрономічні образи як сферу, що виступає джерелом для осмислення фізичних, емоційно-психологічних, інтелектуальних та морально-етичних характеристик людини. Актуальність роботи зумовлена антропоцентричною парадигмою сучасної лінгвістики та потребою поглибленого вивчення когнітивних механізмів метафоризації у фразеологічній системі мови.

У статті проведено семантико-когнітивний, описовий та компонентний аналіз фразеологічних одиниць, зафіксованих у сучасних фразеологічних джерелах, а також застосовано порівняльний метод для виявлення універсальних і національно-специфічних моделей метафоризації. Виокремлено чотири основні підгрупи фразеологічних одиниць, що репрезентують фізичні, емоційно-психологічні, інтелектуальні та морально-етичні характеристики людини.

Доведено, що в обох мовах функціонують базові когнітивні моделі, зокрема ЛЮДСЬКА ЗОВНІШНІСТЬ = ВЛАСТИВОСТІ ЇЖИ, ЕМОЦІЙНИЙ СТАН = СМАК / ХАРЧОВА СИТУАЦІЯ, МИСЛЕННЯ = ПРИГОТУВАННЯ ЇЖИ, МОРАЛЬНІ ЯКОСТІ = ЕКОНОМІЯ ХАРЧОВОГО РЕСУРСУ.

Водночас, виявлено національно-культурну специфіку реалізації цих моделей: українська фразеологія тяжіє до інтроспективного відображення внутрішніх станів і категорій соціальної рівноваги (хліб як символ праці, справедливості та взаємності), тоді як англійська найчастіше акцентує на ситуативності, ступені завершеності процесу та принципах відповідальності та лояльності, відданості. Отже, гастрономічні фразеологізми постають як цілісна система антропоцентричної концептуалізації, що відображає взаємодію мови, культури та когніції.

**Ключові слова:** фразеологічна одиниця/фразеологізм/фразема; гастрономічний компонент; антропоцентризм; когнітивна метафора; концептуалізація; аксіологічна семантика; порівняльний аналіз; мовна картина світу.

**Introduction.** Modern linguistic research increasingly focuses on the anthropocentric dimension of language, in which humans act not only as the bearer of a linguistic system but also as the central object of conceptualization. Phraseology plays a special role in this process, as phraseological units accumulate a people's culturally conditioned experience, reflect established notions of the world, and provide an evaluative interpretation of reality.

One of the productive sources of phraseological imagery is the gastronomic sphere. Food, as a fundamental element of human existence, serves as a universal cognitive domain, through which ideas about a person's physical condition, emotions, intellectual abilities, and moral qualities are verbalized. Gastronomic images in phraseology not only perform a nominative function but also



actively contribute to the formation of the linguistic picture of the world, reflecting the value orientations and mental stereotypes of a particular linguistic culture.

Despite the large number of works devoted to the problems of phraseological metaphor, cognitive semantics and linguoculturology, gastronomic phraseological units are mostly considered within the framework of individual thematic groups in a fragmentary manner, or without taking into account their anthropocentric potential.

A comprehensive approach to the analysis of gastronomic phraseology as a systemic means of representing a person in various dimensions, as well as a comparative analysis of corresponding units in the Ukrainian and English languages, remains understudied. This determines the relevance of the proposed study.

The methodological basis of the work is the anthropocentric paradigm, according to which language is considered as a tool for conceptualizing human experience and value orientations. The study draws heavily on the principles of cognitive linguistics, in particular the theory of conceptual metaphor, which allows interpreting gastronomic images as source domains for understanding physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, and moral characteristics of a person.

The study uses a combination of general scientific and special linguistic methods, including a descriptive method to systematize and inventory phraseological units with a gastronomic component, semantic-cognitive analysis to identify conceptual models and metaphorical transfers, component analysis to determine the semantic structure of phraseological units, a linguocultural approach to interpret the culturally determined meanings of gastronomic images, and a comparative (contrastive) method to identify common and distinctive features of gastronomic phraseology in Ukrainian and English. The application of the above methods made it possible to construct a comprehensive typological model of gastronomic phraseology, reflecting the hierarchical representation of a person as a physical, emotional, intellectual and moral being in the linguistic picture of the world.

**Theoretical framework.** The study of phraseological units with a gastronomic component within the framework of the anthropocentric paradigm is based on the developments of cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology and the theory of conceptual metaphor. In the works of J. Lakoff and M. Johnson, metaphor is considered as a basic mechanism for conceptualizing experience, particularly bodily and sensory, which is relevant for the analysis of gastronomic images in phraseology (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). These ideas were further developed in the works of R. Langacker, who emphasized the role of figurative-schematic structures in the formation of the meaning of linguistic units (Langacker, 1987; Lakoff, 1987).

Within the framework of the linguo-cultural approach, gastronomic phraseology is considered as a carrier of culturally marked meanings that reflect national ideas about a person, his moral qualities, emotional states and intellectual abilities (Kövecses, 2005; 2010; Matuzkova, 2019). Ukrainian researchers also emphasize the evaluative and axiological potential of phraseological units with somatic and objective components, which include gastronomic images (Kryknitska, 2018; Selivanova, 2000). In particular, it is emphasized that through the gastronomic metaphor, both positive and negative characteristics of a person are verbalized, including honesty/dishonesty, sincerity, moral stability and other features (Chaika et al., 2021; Katan, 2009; Kryknitska, 2017).

**The purpose of the article** is to identify the features of the representation of anthropocentric human characteristics using phraseological units with a gastronomic component in Ukrainian and English. The analysis involves phraseological units with a gastronomic component, recorded in phraseographic sources, as well as stable comparative constructions with phraseological meaning functioning in modern speech.

**Analysis.** In the process of analyzing the factual material, it was established that phraseological units with a gastronomic component actively function as means of anthropomorphic characterization, representing various aspects of the human image. Considering the semantic focus and nature of the evaluation, it is appropriate to classify the studied phraseological units into four main subgroups – phraseologisms to denote: physical characteristics, emotional-psychological characteristics, intellectual abilities, and moral-ethical characteristics of a person. This division reflects the gradual transition from physical to value characteristics of a person and is based on the anthropocentric principle of organizing phraseological space.

### 1. Phraseological units to denote the physical characteristics of a person.

The first subgroup includes phraseological units with a gastronomic component, serving to characterize a person's appearance, build, and general physical appearance.

In these phraseological units, food images primarily highlight visually and tactilely perceived properties – color, shape, volume, density, or consistency, which in the process of metaphorization are transferred to the bodily features of a person. Due to their clarity, gastronomic images are easily decoded by the recipient, which determines their high expressiveness and evaluative potential.

In Ukrainian, the phraseological units *кров з молоком* (DPUUL: 315) (healthy, rosy – about a person and their face), *як маків цвіт* (DPUUL: 365) (about the freshness and attractiveness of the face), *мов буряк* (DPUUL: 315) (about redness), which represent coloristic characteristics of appearance, are common. A person's physique is interpreted through such units as *як вареник у маслі* (DPUUL: 51), which denote corpulent, well-groomed light-hearted person, as well as *худий, як сухар (як тріска)* (DPUUL: 723) or *як вишкварка* (DPUUL: 93) emphasize excessive thinness and physical exhaustion. In the examples given, the gastronomic component performs the function of a figurative standard, and food becomes the source of axiological evaluation: soft, nutritious, light products are associated with vitality and health, while dry or lean ones are associated with weakness and physical disproportion.

In English, physical characteristics of a person are also often conceptualized through gastronomic images. For example, the phraseologisms *as pale as milk*; *a doughy face* and *as red as a beet* (MW) convey complexion, while *be doughy* (about a person) or *pudding-faced* (MW) represent the softness and shapelessness of the figure. The units *thin as a wafer* (CD) and *full of beans* (EUPD: 365) are used to denote physique, where the former emphasizes extreme thinness, while the latter emphasizes physical liveliness and excess energy. Gastronomic components in such phraseologisms are based on associations with the consistency, nutritional value or physical effect of food, allowing for a visual representation of a person's physical condition.

Comparative analysis shows that phraseological units of this subgroup have a distinct expressive-evaluative semantics and tend towards colloquial or journalistic usage. They not only describe a person's external physical characteristics, but also reflect culturally conditioned ideas about the physical norm, health and attractiveness. Both languages share a common cognitive model: HUMAN APPEARANCE = FOOD PROPERTIES. However, specific images and axiological accents vary depending on the national-cultural experience, which forms both universal and specific features of the phraseological representation of human physical characteristics.

## 2. Phraseological units to denote the emotional-psychological characteristics of a person.

Phraseological units with a gastronomic component are widely used to represent the emotional and psychological state of a person, particularly his internal experiences, mood, level of psycho-emotional tension or psychological balance. In such units, food and the associated taste sensations, processes of consumption or being in a certain food situation serve as a metaphorical tool for understanding abstract emotional states through direct sensory experience. This determines the high level of expressiveness and emotional richness of the corresponding phraseological units.

In Ukrainian, emotional and psychological characteristics are often verbalized through taste associations, primarily the opposition between sweet and bitter, which has a deep axiological basis. Thus, the phraseological unit *гірко на душі (на серці)* (DPUUL: 148) represents a state of inner pain, disappointment or mental suffering, where the negative emotional experience is conceptualized through the taste of food. On the contrary, *солодко на душі* or *мед на серце* (PDUL) refer to a state of joy, satisfaction, and inner harmony (positive axiology of “sweet”). Similar units appeal to a person’s bodily experience, due to which the psychological state appears as tangible, almost physically experienced. Thus, emotion is reinterpreted as an internal “taste” that reflects its intensity and quality.

In English, emotional and psychological states of a person are often conveyed through phraseological units related not only to taste, but also to the situation or context of food consumption. The expressions *to be in a pickle* (MW) or *to be in a jam* (EUPD: 80) are indicative of this, denoting a state of confusion, psychological discomfort, or a difficult life situation. Here, the negative emotional state is conceptualized through being in an inappropriate or uncomfortable environment, associated with pickling or isolation. These metaphors actualize the idea of emotional sticking and lack of control over circumstances. The same meaning of expressing negative emotions due to being in uncomfortable and difficult circumstances or situations is conveyed by phraseological units *to be in hot water(s)*; *to be in the soup* (MW). The phraseological unit *full of vinegar* (EUPD: 365) characterizes a sour, caustic, unkind person, where taste characteristics are also reinterpreted.

Comparative analysis shows that in both languages, the gastronomic metaphor in the emotional-psychological sphere is based on the universal cognitive model EMOTIONAL STATE = TASTE / BEING IN A FOOD SITUATION / REACTION TO IT, however, the methods of its implementation have national and cultural specificities. Ukrainian phraseological units tend towards an internal, introspective representation of experiences through taste, while in English, the situational aspect, related to emotional reactions to external circumstances, dominates. As a result, gastronomic phraseological units emerge as an effective means of conceptualizing the emotional sphere of a person, combining bodily experience with psychological and cultural ideas.

## 3. Phraseological units to denote the intellectual characteristics of a person.

Phraseologisms with a gastronomic component are actively involved in representing human intellectual abilities, particularly the level of thinking, cognitive organization, and the ability to analyze, interpret information and make decisions. Within this subgroup, the gastronomic metaphor is based primarily on the analogy between mental activity and the processes of cooking, processing or digesting food, allowing abstract cognitive phenomena to be understood through concrete and well-known experience.

In Ukrainian, one of the most representative examples is the phraseological unit *каша в голові* (DPUUL: 157), which denotes a state of intellectual disorganization, confusion of thoughts or a lack of clear, logical thinking. The image of porridge as a heterogeneous, mixed dish metaphorically reproduces the chaotic nature of mental processes, in which elements of knowledge fail to form an ordered system. In this case, the gastronomic component performs not only a nominative, but also an evaluative function, signaling a negative intellectual characteristic. The phrase *пуста голова* (PDUL) refers to a person with a lack of knowledge, limited intellectual capacity, or who lacks life experience. Thus, a person’s cognitive state is assessed through the result of “unsuccessful cooking” of a mental product. Also in Ukrainian phraseology, *the head* can be reinterpreted as a kitchen utensil used in the cooking process: *голова (не) варить* (DPUUL: 156) – someone is (not) intelligent, clever, or *макітра зварил* (DPUUL: 365) – someone made the right decision, did the right thing, thought of something; clever. Similarly, in phraseological units *нереварити (нереправити) інформацію, перемолоти в голові* (PDUL), thinking is directly conceptualized as a process of cooking or digestion.

In English, a similar model is realized in the phraseological unit *half-baked idea (scheme)* (CD), which means an immature, insufficiently thought-out concept, idea, story, plan, etc., usually invented by dishonest means. Here, intellectual activity is conceptualized as the process of cooking a dish, where the degree of readiness directly correlates with the level of elaboration of the idea. Half-baked signals cognitive incompleteness, superficiality, or haste in thinking. This image emphasizes not so much the chaos of thoughts as their incompleteness, which reflects another aspect of intellectual evaluation. The phraseological unit *to overcook something* (figurative) means to overcomplicate or “overcook” a concept. The expression *food for thought* (MW) means something that should be thought about or considered carefully. Here, thinking appears as a cooking/cooked product”, that is, a dish that can be cooked, digested, and complicated.

Comparative analysis reveals that both languages are dominated by the cognitive model of THINKING = COOKING, within which the intellectual result is understood as a “product” that must meet certain quality criteria. At the same time, Ukrainian phraseology more often emphasizes the internal disorganization of thinking or the filling of the head, while English phraseology emphasizes the degree of completion of the intellectual process. This gives grounds to speak about the national-cultural specificity of the interpretation of intellectual defects and norms, despite common underlying cognitive mechanisms.

Thus, gastronomic phraseological units representing a person’s intellectual characteristics perform an important conceptual and evaluative function, allowing us to understand the quality of thinking, its structure, and effectiveness through images of food. They demonstrate that intelligence in linguistic consciousness functions as a process of “mental cooking”, the success of which determines a person’s cognitive value in social space.

## 4. Phraseological units to denote the moral and ethical characteristics of a person.

Phraseological units with a gastronomic component are a productive means of representing the moral and ethical characteristics of a person, since food in the linguistic picture of the world is closely connected with ideas about work, justice, mutual obligations, gratitude and social responsibility. Within this subgroup, the gastronomic metaphor goes beyond the boundaries of purely bodily experience and acquires a distinct axiological dimension, serving as a tool for assessing human behavior from the point of view of the ethical norms of the community.



In Ukrainian, morality can be transmitted as a way of “getting bread.” Here, “bread” functions as a symbol of a morally legitimate resource (Matuzkova, 2019: 200). While the phraseological unit *істи хліб* (DPUUL: 282) means to have everything necessary for life, *істи сухий хліб* (DPUUL: 282) means to live in shortages, in poverty, in need. The phraseological unit *істи чужий хліб* (DPUUL: 282) is used to characterize a person as morally dependent, one who lives at the expense of others and not fully responsible for his own existence. In this case, bread serves as a symbol of honestly earned labor, and the fact that it is called “someone else’s bread” is a marker of a violation of the moral balance between what is received and what is given. The phraseologism *легкий хліб* (DPUUL: 745) denotes means of subsistence obtained without labor, without much effort, while the expression *тяжкий хліб* (DPUUL: 746) refers to achievements obtained through hard work, with great efforts. A morally approved model of behavior is denoted by the a phraseme *заробляти на хліб чесною працею* (PDUL), and the a phraseme *відбирати останній шматок хліба* (PDUL) is an immoral act, a violation of the principle of justice. Thus, moral evaluation is formed through the idea of unfair exchange, where consuming food without one’s own contribution is interpreted as a negative character trait. The gastronomic component here performs the function of an ethical indicator, signaling a deviation from the socially approved norm.

In English, gastronomic phraseological units are actively involved in the representation of moral-ethical characteristics of a person, in particular such categories as gratitude, loyalty, social responsibility and justice in the distribution of resources. Within this subgroup, food functions not only as a material object, but also as a symbol of a morally legitimate means of livelihood and an indicator of ethical behavior. The phraseological unit *to earn one’s bread* (CD) is indicative, in which *bread* appears as a metonymic embodiment of honestly obtained food, and the process of “earning” itself marks a morally approved model of social participation. At the same time, the expression *to take the bread out of someone’s mouth* (MW) represents a violation of the principle of justice, since depriving another of a basic resource is interpreted as an ethically unacceptable action. The phrase *to break bread (with someone)* occupies a special place, conceptualizing shared food consumption as an act of trust, reconciliation, and the establishment of peaceful relations. In this case, the gastronomic component takes on the significance of social and moral unification. This phraseme derived from biblical scenes where bread was shared among people. In some contexts, it refers specifically to the Christian Eucharist or Communion. A similar axiological content is realized in another biblical expression *to be salt of the earth* (CD) (originates from the Bible (Matthew 5:13), where Jesus used the phrase during the Sermon on the Mount to describe his followers as valuable, honest, and necessary for the preservation of good. It highlights the high ancient value of salt as a preservative and flavor enhancer rather than its literal taste), where salt symbolizes moral purity, reliability, and fundamental decency of the individual. Another aspect of moral evaluation is related to resource allocation and the pursuit of profit. The phrase *to have one’s cake and eat it too* (MW) reflects the moral ambivalence of behavior, which consists of the desire to simultaneously preserve a resource and utilize it, that is, to avoid the natural principle of loss as the price of gain. In this case, the gastronomic metaphor captures the imbalance between possession and consumption. The expression *to butter someone up* (EUPD: 178) emphasizes the morally questionable strategy of achieving a goal through flattery, where “butter” becomes a metaphor for manipulative influence.

Thus, within the framework of Ukrainian and English, a universal cognitive model MORALITY = FOOD RESOURCE ECONOMY can be traced, in which food is conceptualized as a symbol of a vital and socially legitimate good, and the method of its acquisition, distribution and consumption becomes an indicator of an ethical norm or its violation. In the Ukrainian linguistic worldview, this model tends to interpret morality through the categories of labor, fair exchange, and social equality, where bread functions as a marker of a fairly obtained resource. In contrast, in English, the emphasis shifts to the principles of responsibility, loyalty, and mutual obligations to the source of the resource. Despite national and cultural differences in axiological emphases, both language systems demonstrate a common metaphorical basis that connects the moral evaluation of human behavior with a model of interaction with the food as a basic form of social good.

**Conclusions.** The analysis of phraseological units with a gastronomic component in Ukrainian and English demonstrates that the food sphere is a universal and productive source for conceptualizing anthropocentric characteristics of a person. Within the physical, emotional-psychological, intellectual and moral-ethical parameters, the gastronomic metaphor performs a nominative and even expressive evaluative and cognitive-modeling function.

Comparative analysis allows us to identify and analyze several basic cognitive models. The reliance on bodily experience as the primary basis of abstract thinking is common to both languages, confirming the universality of metaphorization mechanisms. Food serves as a basic cultural code through which both physical parameters and complex internal, cognitive, and socio-normative characteristics of the individual are understood.

At the same time, national and cultural specificity of the implementation of these models has been revealed. Ukrainian phraseology tends toward introspective representation of internal states and socio-ethical balance (bread as a symbol of labor, justice, reciprocity), whereas English more often emphasizes situationality, the degree of completion of the process, and the categories of responsibility and loyalty. This indicates differences in the axiological dominants of linguistic pictures of the world while maintaining a universal cognitive base.

Thus, gastronomic phraseological units function as an integral system of anthropocentric conceptualization, in which bodily experience is transformed into a tool for interpreting the physical, psychological, intellectual, and moral-ethical dimensions of a person. Their analysis deepens our understanding of the interaction of language, culture, and cognition and confirms the productivity of the gastronomic metaphor as a universal mechanism for the linguistic representation of human experience.

## DICTIONARIES

EUPD – English-Ukrainian phraseological dictionary

CD – Cambridge Dictionary

DPUUL – Dictionary of phraseologisms of the Ukrainian language

MW – Merriam-Webster Dictionary

PDUL – Phraseological dictionary of the Ukrainian language

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