

## Perception of Kazakh metaphorical phrases with ‘milk’ component

**Rsaldy Alkhatova**<sup>1</sup>; **Zhailagul Sagyndykova**<sup>1</sup> Ass.Prof., PhD; **Iveta Līce**<sup>2</sup> Doc., Dr.paed.  
Sh.Ualikhanov Kokshetau State University, Kazakhstan<sup>1</sup>;  
Institute of Education and Home Economics, Latvia University of Agriculture, Latvia<sup>2</sup>  
ladyrk@mail.ru<sup>1</sup>; aykasag@mail.ru<sup>1</sup>; iveta.lice@llu.lv<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** Language serves as means of accumulation and storages of cultural-significant information. In some units this information for modern native speaker is implicit, is hidden by century transformations, can be taken only indirectly. Nevertheless, it is and "works" at the level of subconsciousness. In this regard, it would be desirable to designate an objective of this research. We consider phraseological units in the Kazakh language with ‘milk’ component. It is known that milk (*sut*), namely in combination "white milk" at representatives of the Kazakh people is connected with old food traditions. The Kazakhs had a nomadic way of life, milk, meat were their main food. For revelation of the Kazakh mentality peculiarity through a prism of food tradition, we selected 10 phraseological units containing "white milk" and "milk" component. The first task we put, to find out how the culture of the Kazakhs formed language concept "milk", how a language sign was attached to cultural sense "milk" and got language images, whether the Kazakh people receive these meanings at present time and how they influence upon speech strategy. During investigation used descriptive, ethnolinguistic methods and an experimental method.

**Keywords:** cultural code, linguacultural analysis, stereotypes, phraseological unit with ‘milk’ component.

### Introduction

Problem of culture representation in language is one of the topical issues in modern linguistics. Linguistic description of food codes of particular culture contributes fundamentally to solution of this issue. In the frames of linguacultural direction a lot of researchers pay attention to study and depiction of culture codes realization in language image-system from the point of its cultural codes transmitting (Yurina E.A., Shestak L.A., Pimenova M.V., Gudkov D.B. etc.). Culinary art is one of the applied and significant fields of human life. It is a part of national culture and has its own symbolic context. It is commonly known, that food belongs to one of the main elements of certain culture. Food acts as a submitter of ethnical characteristics. Investigation of perception of image-system comprises complex analysis of metaphorical lexis, phraseological units, idioms and proverbs. At this rate, huge number of figurative words and phrases present system of food images. It demonstrates cultural food code implementation in image-structure of the Kazakh language.

Culinary art is one of the active fields of metaphorical expansion in each language. It has many evidences. Food is natural vital human necessities. Everything, concerning food (production process, cooking, ritual forms of eating or drinking) takes particular place in social and everyday spheres of life-sustaining activity. All these phenomena have their cultural-symbolic meaning (ceremonial, ritual, sacral, cultic) in every world cultures.

Mental images of food products are in memory of every man. It comprises many bright gestalt pictures, connected with various sensors (visual image, form, colour, smell, taste, temperature and even audio feelings). These images are due to sustainable associations with emotional and physiological human feelings like hunger, appetite, pleasure, anger etc. All these facts contribute to investigate material, psychological, mental and abstract-categorical spheres of reality. Such sensorial and emotional-psychological fullness of food images, their cultural-symbolical and cultural-valuable significance make food metaphor extremely effective means of emotional-psychological impact upon the addressee of speech and cause rate of its usage in modern discourse practices.

## Methodology

One of the central issues for new lingua-cultural paradigm of research in phraseology is the concept the culture code, following from vision of culture as about semiotics system. From this point of view, the world is nature, artifacts, external qualities and internal properties of a person, acquired semiotics sense in the process of learning and perception. Hence it appears that system of cultural codes is hierarchically ordered system, opposed each other on any bases or intertwining among themselves. Moreover, each cultural code represents own semiotic system in which different material and formal means can be used for coding the same content consolidated as a whole to a world picture, to worldview of this society. "Cultural code is understood as a 'net' which culture "throws" over world, divides, categorized, structures and estimates it" (Красных, 2002, 232).

Thus, cultural code is a system of signs (sign bodies) of material world, which become transmitter of cultural meanings; in the process of development by the person of the world, they gained the significance, which is distinguished, decoded at their perception by the interpreter. Signs are transmitters of cultural meanings - can be of various characters: subject, behavioural, verbal etc.

Cultural code is a key link in interpretation of phraseological units, which are represented as process of language sign perception through a prism of cultural knowledge. The native speaker owns this knowledge in this or that volume to its competence. This knowledge "is interwoven" into a language sign and form its cultural semantics in the process of reproduction and perception of the phraseological unit in speech (Ковшова, 2006).

Concerning correlation between phraseological unit and culture codes, we mean its correspondence through word-components. Meaning of phraseological unit, as we know, cannot be brought out of meanings of word-components and is fixed in language memory of a native speaker. Being translators not only language, but also cultural sense, these word-components participate in creation of cultural semantics of phraseological unit. Behind them, there are realities of the world, and the realities, which have received a certain cultural significance. Respectively nomination of such realities becomes an embodiment of these or those cultural meanings (Телия, 2005).

Obviously, phraseological units in the process of speech correspond also to the most ancient layers of culture - archetypical oppositions, mythological and bible ideas of world arrangement, i.e. everything that lies in the depth of consciousness of a native speaker. So it even more complicates and without that a difficult picture of phraseological units functioning in speech.

As perception of cultural meanings of phraseological unit occurs at poorly reflexed or unconscious level, allow us to reconstruct this process, to certify its passing, on the one hand, results of associative experiment, but mainly, reflection of the researcher over process of reproduction and perception of phraseological unit in speech (Ковшова, 2006).

Scientist of lingua-culture relies, first of all, on own cultural and language competence and works with "deep introspection" method, which is a key in research of semantic processes. Pertinently to remind that also Lucien Tesnière in his work devoted to bases of structural syntax, in certain chapter "An introspective method", spoke about its importance and at the same time warned about its careful application. Lucien Tesnière wrote : "...Introspection reproach that it is difficult to use it, because it is too subjective and therefore it is dangerous... Introspective method it is possible to accuse of subjectivity because he appeals to intuition... However, besides, he appeals and to internal experience. Thereby this method becomes experimental and, therefore, objective" (Теньер, 1988).

In reality, "deep introspection" method allows reconstructing process of cultural interpretation at reproduction and perception of phraseological unit by the subject of speech.

## Results and discussion

Figurative lexical and phraseological nomination based on assumptions from gastronomical field is in close connection with language expression of various objects and environmental phenomena from the speaker's point of view. Different features of food phenomena serve as valuable fundament for expression of own evaluation (rational) and emotional-evaluation (ethical, esthetical and different

other types of evaluation) relations to nominated objects. For instance, axiological relation to ideal phenomena (such as character, intellect, mentality, social behavior, social phenomena, and relationships) can be expressed by means of usage of food products' features and quality, processes and situations: *Ана сүті ауызынан кетпеген* (the mother's milk has not dried off one's lips yet) is about very young person, *сүтке тиген күшіктей болды* (look like a puppy, which touched milk) - 'sleazy, hangdog look', *Сүт пісірім уақыт* (time of boiling milk) – 'fifteen minutes' (Кеңесбаев, 2007).

Reconstructed cultural interpretation can be considered as the evidence of special sign function of phraseological unit - to convey cultural meaning which promotes understanding of interlocutors not only as transmitters of one language but also as representatives of one culture.

Let's take such phraseological unit as *Ананың сүтімен еніп, сүйекке сіңген әдет* (to absorb tradition with mother's milk).

Meaning of this phraseological unit - 'to acquire anything firmly since the earliest years'. It means that someone, thanks to environment in which he grew, organically perceived bases of its worldview, system of values, moral-ethical standards, customs with the help of his/her mother etc.

The phraseological unit's origin, obviously, has similarity to Latin saying: 'Ut poene cum lacta nutricis errorem suxisse videamur'. So we, perhaps, almost with milk of foster-mother absorb delusion' (Михельсон, 1994).

Let's take examples of phraseological unit usage, which meets usually in speech of educated people; in the dictionary this phraseological unit has a label 'bookish'.

*Етінен өткен, сүйегіне жеткен, атадан мирас алған, ананың сүтіменен емген надандық әлдеқашан адамиылықтан кетірген* 'Ignorance, taken with the milk at the breast, inherited by the ancestors, got into bones and meat, deprives of a right of humanity forever.' (Abai Kunanbayev). *Сынның әдісін осылай түсіну осы күнге дейін көп сынышымыздың сүтпен еніп, сүйегіне сіңген әдеті болып келеді* 'To understand criticism nowadays in such way become destiny of many critics' (Karatajev M.). *Сүтпен кірген мінездің шынымен-ақ сүйекпен кеткені* 'The character, taken with the milk at the breast, to tell the truth, can be taken out only by corporal punishment' (Кеңесбаев, 2007).

Let's try to reconstruct the process of phraseological unit correspondence with those layers of cultural knowledge which in this or that volume, depending on cultural competence of the native speaker.

It may be noted that the phraseological unit *Ананың сүтімен еніп, сүйекке сіңген әдет* (to absorb tradition with mother's milk) goes back to the most ancient conceptualization of feeding as natural digestion anything by a human body, feeding as a way of cultivation of all living.

Image of the phraseological unit "leads" the researcher to the most ancient mythological form of understanding of the world - animistic, i.e. to spiritualizing of manifestations of person properties. Archetypical opposition of soul and a body cause emergence of an image of the phraseological unit; also the phraseological unit causes semantic associations with bible ideas of food spiritual and food physical.

In the basis of the phraseological unit image lies metaphorical likening of spiritual education - to feed babies by breast milk and it defines the process of strengthened perception of anything.

A component *ену* 'to absorb' corresponds to anthropic set, i.e. actually human, and somatic, i.e. corporal, culture codes. An anthropic code treats, it agrees with developed by V.N. Teliya work, to the system of cultural codes, set of all manifestations of a person in his physical, relational or functional plans; to somatic - qualitative and quantitative characteristics of a body of a person, his pose, gestures, etc. Set of components *ананың сүті* 'mother's milk' corresponds to somatic, natural and gastronomic code, *ананың* "mother's" - to anthropic (namely family) culture code (Телия, 2005).

"Near with objective process there is effective, real and personified world of "the distorted reality", worldview, at the same time obliged to the existence to the first, and not related to its formal-logical sequence. Production, work acts, biological moments - everything is interpreted cosmogonically. What

can be more naturally and more vitally, than need of clothes or dwelling? And the act of feeding, every day and real and quite physiologic, doesn't cease to remain, though concerns a circle of certain images" (Фреаденберг, 1997).

It means that word-components of the phraseological unit “*ену/to absorb*”, “*сүтімен/with milk*”, “*ананың/mother’s*” are the words, which have a situation, become sign in its cultural perception, because its components received cultural sense, distracted from the events in a concrete situation.

Thus, the image of the phraseological unit reports that the events in the world were seen through the process of feeding. "Not therefore, of course, that biological, real food gives to it any occasion; but because it is connected with production and labor acts more than something else; consciousness doesn't remain to it indifferent, but works round such important phenomenon - allocates it from context of reality, accents, puts forward on the first worldview plan, but, of course, comprehends it specifically, in categories of understanding of the world in general".

Although “*сүт/milk*” is also a special food - food for babies, it associates with life beginning, from beginning of perception of person’s life. “*Ананың сүті/Mother’s milk*” is the phrase specifying by the form of belonging something to someone, essence - her owner, the producer. At the same time, “*ананың сүті/mother’s milk*” - realia endured in culture: it has special, conceptual sense - sense of birth of a baby and his first feeding, sense of basis, without which there is no continuation of life of a baby, sense of cardinal source of life. Besides, the realia “*ананың сүті/mother’s milk*” contains sense of communication corporal, physical between mother and her child, metaphorically understood as communication between predecessors and successors of generation, so it means that cultural knowledge, traditions, bases of worldview.

Thus, in the phraseological unit *Ананың сүтімен еніп, сүйекке сіңген әдет* (to absorb tradition with mother’s milk) we see not only set of word-components - 'to acquire anything firmly since the earliest years'. We see in this phraseological unit not only an image "read" from literal meaning of words making the phraseological unit, we find also devices – metaphor, underlying the internal form of the phraseological unit. The linguacultural view of cultural essence of the phraseological unit allows, by explication of cultural interpretation of the phraseological unit, to talk about its cultural significance.

Language significance and cultural content of the phraseological unit *Ананың сүтімен еніп, сүйекке сіңген әдет* (to absorb tradition with mother’s milk) causes a special role of the phraseological unit in speech. It is like a standard, i.e. measure of assimilation by someone of moral principles, views, and to serve as measure of naturalness, harmony of any action assimilated to feeding of a child in infancy. Additional symbolical meaning of correctness, positivity of the acquired views, principles brings the component “*ана/mother*” symbolizing a perennial spring of good, love and warm-heartedness.

The phraseological unit *Ананың сүтімен еніп, сүйекке сіңген әдет* (to absorb tradition with mother’s milk) as a cultural sign testifies: in desire to comprehend not household, but existential meaning of everything, that occurs in the world. An educated person gave to a usual situation - feeding of a baby by maternal milk - the symbolical sense connecting this situation to values, allocated with a person in the process of world understanding.

Thus, we tried to prove that the subject of speech, reproducing and perceiving the phraseological unit in the course of communication, not only shows the language competence - uses the phraseological unit according to its language meaning. At the deep level of consciousness the subject of speech carries out cultural interpretation of the phraseological unit, "coming out", with support of word-components, in space of cultural codes, transferring and receiving, certainly, not in the form of developed text, but in the form of impulses, associations, clots of images and emotions - cultural meanings of the phraseological unit. A researcher, modeling process of cultural interpretation, only gives it fullness and relative completeness.

According to our investigation, we have made a questionnaire among Kazakh students (18-22 years old), acquiring the Kazakh language as native language. There are 10 phraseological units. Each phraseological unit has two questions. In summary, we received 130 definitions and 130 associations

to these phraseological units. There are cases, when responders have difficulties with identification or no answer follows at all. The questionnaire is in written form. All responders are volunteers.

There are phraseological units to which all respondents identify correctly and have positive associations. All these phraseological units in their origin have positive history, concerning upbringing, tradition and customs. The phraseological unit *Адал сүт емген* ‘to drink honest milk’ means well-bred, educated, mannerly person (mostly this phraseological unit is for future brides). Let’s see the usage of this phraseological unit in literary style.

*Келін алып, қызығыңды да көре алмадым, мен бұл дүниеден озғалы жатырмын, анаңды сыйла...адал сүт емген әйел ал* ‘Having taken the bride, and pleasure I didn't see, I leave this world, respect mother... marry the well-educated girl’ («Kazakh fairy tale») (Кеңесбаев, 2007).

*Ақ сүтін ақтады* ‘to justify white milk’ means to fulfill duty with a clear conscience, to comply with wish of parents. *Немересін баулып отырған өзі екен. Бірақ ақ сүті ақталыпты, - десін бір қойысатын жұрт* ‘It was he, who brought up the grandson. People said that his work came true’ (M.Auezov) (Кеңесбаев, 2007).

*Жаны сүт татып тұр* ‘soul has taste of milk’ is used to express carelessness, kindness, childish, pure, innocent person (*mostly used as a joke, has meaning of ‘vain, conceited’*).

*Сүт кенже* ‘milk - the youngest’ means the youngest child in family. *Қарт әжесі Өтеуіті «сүт кенжем» деп емшегінен ерте айырып, өзінің бауырына басып өсіріп еді* ‘The old grandmother, having weaned Utesh early away from a breast, whom named "favourite", brought him up herself’ (A.Nurpeisova) (Кеңесбаев, 2007).

*Сүттей жарық* ‘light like milk’ means as bright as day. *Сүттей жарық, айлы түн. Таң әлі жоқ. Бірақ жоқ екенін білсе де, Абай әлде қандай өзгеше «таңды» сезеді* ‘Moonlight night, as bright as day. The dawn isn't present still. But knowing that there is no dawn, Abai feels another "dawn"’ (M.Auezov) (Кеңесбаев, 2007).

*Ернінен енесінің емшек сүті кетпеген* ‘mother’s milk is not still dried from the lips’ means very young, a child. This phraseological unit is used to express, that person does not reached manhood. It is used to blame someone. *Емшек сүті кетпеген ернінен* *Екі інімді мен қайтіп асырармын* ‘Mother's breast from my lips are not wiped away, but I will take care of two young brothers’ (K.Zhumaliyev). All these phraseological units and also *Ананың сүтімен еніп, сүйекке сіңген әдет* (to absorb tradition with mother’s milk) were described using positive definitions. It shows us, that these phraseological units are in constant usage even nowadays. (Кеңесбаев, 2007).

However, such phraseological units as *Сүт үстінде қаймақ болды* ‘there is sour cream on a surface of milk’, which means to grow up without any difficulties. *Көз салып біздің күйге бойлаймысың? Әлі де тірімін деп ойлаймысың? Ерке қыз, сүт үстінде қаймақ болған, Үйдегі желігіңді қоймаймысың* ‘Couldn't you really understand our situation? Or you think, that you are still alive? Spoiled daughter, as the princess on a pea, cannot you leave your family naughtiness’ (Кеңесбаев, 2007).

*Ананың ақ сүті ұрсын!* ‘Let mother’s white milk hit you!’ is used as curse. *Шіркін, сұлу дүниені, Талқандатсақ тас жүрекке, Жан күйдіріп іштің шері, Ана сүтін сауар көкке* ‘Damn beautiful, wonderful life, breaking my heart stone, burning my soul pain, damn it all!’ (D.Abilev). *Сүлеймен жұлқынып кетуге айналды. Ақ сүтімді көкке сауам! Әйел омырауын жырттып жіберді* ‘Suleimen overreacted. Damn it all, torn wife’s dress’ (S.Yerubayev). *Қалқам, Зейнешжан, тілімді алмасаң, емшегімді көкке сауам, қолымды теріс жайып, қарғыс берем* ‘Dear Zeineshshhan, if you do not obey me, I will damn you’ (B.Mailin) (Кеңесбаев, 2007).

*Сүттей ұйыды* ‘turn sour like milk’ means to take on trust, to take at its face value, to believe. *Міне, бұлардың қайсысына болса да Нұрым сүттей ұйып: «Пәле, пәле, тіпті жәні бар, аруақ асыға ма, саса ма? Біз ұмытсақ та, жарықтықтар жебеп, желеп жүреді гой» деп арқасы шымырлап кететін* ‘Nurym got used to each of them and at one thought of, whether spirit hurries, whether in confusion, it threw him into a shiver. Even if we forget, they will support him’ (S.Toraigrov). None of respondents gave correct definition; due to it they had wrong association,

while perceiving this phraseological unit. It shows us, that all these phraseological units are not so popular among young generation. It gives us possibility to think that these phraseological units become archaic phrases. (Кеңесбаев, 2007).

### Conclusions

The Kazakhs were nomads. Domestic cattle were one of the most significant parts of their life. It was impossible to imagine their existing without domestic animals. Dairy products were one of the important components of the Kazakhs feeding. The Kazakhs usually used milk in final substance. Thus, there were facts of usage of unpasteurized milk. Kazakhs use nowadays milk of cows, sheep, goats, female horses. The most widespread - cow milk.

Meaning of the word ‘milk’ according to T.F. Yefremova:

1. The white nutritious liquid gave out by breast glands of women and females of mammals after delivery for feeding of babies, cubs.
2. Liquid received from cows, goats and some other animals, used in food.
3. Whitish liquid substance in a root, a stalk, leaves of some plants. //Whitish liquid extracted from some fruits, seeds of plants.
4. Whitish liquid of any substances, reminding such liquid.

There are two types of meaning used in phraseological units. The first is mother’s milk; the second is milk, produced by cows. The first type of meaning used to code tradition, customs, passed from generation to generation, the way of teaching, tutoring children. Here we see significance of mother in upbringing. In addition, we can say, that all respondents identified correctly both the most of phraseological units with component “mother’s milk” and with such meaning. It give us opportunity to consider, that all young people continue to save tradition and customs even nowadays. Cow milk is used to express quality or characteristics. There is negative colouring in these phraseological units. Many respondents cannot give correct definitions to them. Therefore, we can say, that these phraseological units are not topical nowadays. They bring difficulties to young generation to perceive them instantly. They have to use only explanatory dictionaries to learn the meaning of these metaphorical phrases.

Thus, having analyzed phraseological units with ‘milk’ component, it is possible to conclude that among them there are stereotypes which measure activity, behavior of the Kazakh ethnos and symbols, which form certain images and give motivation.

Phraseological units with ‘milk’ component represent congestion of cultural information, reaching depth of spirit of the Kazakh people and world culture.

### Bibliography

1. Кеңесбаев І. (2007). *Фразеологиялық сөздік* (Phraseological dictionary). Алматы, Арыс баспасы. (in Kazakh)
2. Ковшова М. Л. (2006). Фразеологизмы как "сжатые" тексты культуры в экспериментальном исследовании // *Речевая деятельность. Языковое сознание. Общающиеся личности*. Материалы XV Международного симпозиума по психолингвистике и теории коммуникации. (Phraseological units as “fasten” texts of culture in experimental investigation // *Speech activity. Language consciousness. Communicating persons*. Materials of XV International symposium on psycholinguistics and communication theories). Москва. (in Russian)
3. Ковшова М. Л. (2006). Языковая и культурная специфика фразеологического знака: теоретические и методологические основы исследования // *Вопросы филологии*. (Language and cultural specificity of phraseological sign: theoretical and methodological bases of investigation//*Questions on philology*). (in Russian)
4. Красных В. В. (2002). *Этнопсихолингвистика и лингвокультурология* (Ethnopsycholinguistics and linguaculture). Москва. (in Russian)
5. Михельсон М. И. (1994). Русская мысль и речь: Свое и чужое. Опыт русской фразеологии. *Сборник образных слов и иносказаний*. (Russian idea and speech: own and

- foreign. Experience of Russian phraseology. *Collection of image-words and allegory*). Москва. (in Russian)
6. Телия В. Н. (2005). О феномене воспроизводимости языковых выражений // *Язык, сознание, коммуникация* (About phenomenon of producing language set expressions// *Language, consciousness, communication*). Москва. (in Russian)
  7. Теньер Л. (1988). *Основы структурного синтаксиса* (Bases of structural syntax). Москва. (in Russian)
  8. Фреаденберг О. М. (1997). *Поэтика сюжета и жанра* (Plot and genre poetics). Москва. (in Russian)