

**SCTMG 2020****International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the  
Context of Modern Globalism»****KALMYK FOOD DISCOURSE: LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL  
FEATURES**

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***Abstract***

This article is devoted to the study of the nutritional discourse of Kalmyks, a traditionally crucial ethnic component of the people, in the Russian colloquial speech of residents of Elista, the capital of the Republic of Kalmykia. The names of food in the linguistic-cultural aspect are analyzed. The food discourse is determined by the development of modern society, the general material culture, and the gastronomic traditions of the family. The object of the study is the Russian colloquial speech of the Kalmyks. Russian statement reflects well the public perception of nutrition, the nutritional preferences of people in various situations. The article attempts to consider the food system of the people, which has a variety of ethnic characteristics, which is reflected in the preparation and presentation of dishes, the ways of their ritual accompaniment. Particular attention is paid to the seasonal diet of Kalmyks, which determines the choice of individual national dishes. The authors argue that the multilayered structure of the lexical-thematic group “food” implies not only the indispensable presence and stability of national-specific features but also their modification due to the influence of the cuisine of other nations. The materials of this study can be used in the teaching of new university courses and seminars, such as “Actual problems of modern linguistics,” “Language of the city,” “Linguoculturology,” “Ethnolinguistics,” “Sociolinguistics,” “Russian colloquial speech in Kalmykia,” as well as in the development of specialized courses, teaching aids, in the research practice of undergraduates and graduate students while writing scientific articles.

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**Keywords:** Kalmyk food, food discourse, Russian, colloquial speech.



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## 1. Introduction

The study of Russian colloquial speech in various regions of Russia, including Kalmykia, is one of the urgent problems of modern linguistics. Of particular value is the linguistic and cultural specificity of ethnic food preferences. The linguistic and cultural uniqueness is determined by the historically established traditions of the preparation and consumption of Kalmyk food products, as well as by modern trends in the development of society. Various dialogical situations of live verbal communication are characterized by great diversity, multi-thematic, ethnocultural specifics (Kotyaeva & Urganulova, 2016). Research in the field of material culture today is more relevant than ever. It is a matrix culture that is a reflection of the evolution of ethnic specificity. Nutrition is one of the leading and eternal problems of humanity. From an ethnographic point of view, food is the most essential, inseparable component of the material culture of different peoples. At all times, among all the material goods, the production of which is the primary basis of the life of human society, people's nutrition has always occupied one of the first places (Nastinova, 2014).

## 2. Problem Statement

The problems of food discourse are studied in lingua-cultural, ethnolinguistics, and sociolinguistics. The importance of the semantic field "food" is increasingly growing, as evidenced by the works of Douglas (1972), Kotyaeva, Urganulova (2013–2018), Nastinova (2014), Odilova (2018), Burykin, Boldyreva, and Muzraeva (2019).

With the increased attention of scientists to the study of food discourse in Russian colloquial speech, some aspects remain poorly understood. One of the urgent problems is the disclosure of linguistic and cultural aspects of the linguistic analysis of nominations of national dishes. Linguistic and cultural analysis reveals the national-cultural specificity reflected in the language of informants. The article describes the names of dishes in the Russian colloquial speech of the Elistins. A quantitative analysis of food nominations allows concluding in which areas the topic of food discourse is most relevant for speakers. The textual implementation of these units in everyday household and the festive speech makes it possible to reconstruct the idea of the traditional Kalmyk cuisine typical of the bearers of this culture. The source of the research is the recordings of Russian colloquial speech of the residents of Elista and publications on the food discourse of the Kalmyks.

## 3. Research Questions

The research material is made up of recordings of Russian colloquial speech by residents of Elista city of various genres, in which the "food" topic took a significant place, as well as the names of gastronomic dishes and food products that were used in the speech of informants. In the XX century, especially in the second half, Kalmyk cuisine became more productive and more diverse under the influence of Russian cuisine and other peoples of our country, as well as under the influence of general trends in the development of nutrition, the book by Gavrilenko "Kalmyk cuisine (Nastinova, 2014)

Our people have long been engaged in cattle breeding, and this determined the peculiarities of ethnic nutrition – the meat included domestic and some wild animals and birds. Women skillfully

prepared various meat dishes, cooked, fried, stewed it with spices, offal was also used. The daily diet necessarily included milk, from which kefir, cottage cheese, feta cheese, and even vodka were obtained. But the most beloved and revered was Kalmyk tea, it was warmly served to both the most honored guest and the traveler who came by chance. Over time, in the Kalmyk cuisine, dishes began to be divided into meat, dairy, fish, flower, vegetable, and there were changes in the culinary of traditional national dishes (Kotyaeva & Urgadulova, 2016).

It seems interesting to find out what names of dishes and drinks most often sound in everyday speech and a holiday setting, what are their linguistic and ethnocultural characteristics. Our informants are people of different sexes, ages (from 17 – 85 years old), education, and social status. As the analysis of recordings of conversational dialogues and polylogues showed, most often they talk about the taste qualities of Kalmyk tea:

A: *Help yourself!*

B: *Thank you, how do you make tea?*

A: *Our generation adheres to national traditions. During the preparation of tea, all movements must be done from left to right.*

In the dialogues of various informants, the Kalmyks cultural traditions associated with the tea-drinking ceremony, as well as the method of preparation and serving of tea, are transmitted. Tea was poured in such a way that, spilling over the bowl, it did a cycle in the sun (clockwise), forming a funnel-shaped surface. Poured not to the edges, departing from the edge to the height of barley grain (about 5-7 mm). This level was considered exemplary. After the tea was poured, the bowl was served to the guest or put on the table. If the guest is a man, the bowl was served to him with his right hand, holding the wrist with his left hand, and the woman with the left hand holding the wrist with his right hand. These were special signs of respect (Bayanova & Alekseeva, 2016).

A significant proportion of milk was used for making not only tea but also "chigəna" (in Kalmyk, "sour milk drink"). In general, all Kalmyks are great hunters up to koumiss, which they call "chigun" and prepared from a mare, camel milk, and, if necessary, from a cow (Nastinova, 2014). Some families made koumiss for medicinal purposes. It is no coincidence that the Central Asian author of the 16th century Ibn Ruzbihan wrote that "... koumiss is like a fragrant drink from a paradise river ... This blessed drink breathes life and heals a sick body." Previously, it was used only in rich and noble families. Still, today the picture has changed, and the purpose of people using koumiss has remained the same, as evidenced by the dialogues of our informants:

A: *Do you drink koumiss, but pour me?*

B: *Join now!*

A: *Thank you, and sour!*

A characteristic feature of the food regime of Kalmyks was its seasonal nature. It is conditionally possible to distinguish two "food" seasons: summer and winter. The summer season lasted from April to October, covering six months from calving to the end of milking. At this time, dairy products were prepared for the winter. The diet of this period consisted mainly of them and was only occasionally supplemented with some meat dish, as a rule, random hunting prey. The more thorough winter diet included livestock meat procured for the future in October-November, various types of cheese and butter,

baked or boiled flour from cultivated cereals, or slightly roasted wild cereal flour bred in water or tea (Zhukovskaya, 2002). Now Kalmyks have a wide variety of meat dishes, as evidenced by the dialogues of informants:

A: *Will you be a Makhanchik?*

B: *No, I decided something easier.*

A: *Chicken?*

B: *Yes, in Teriyaki sauce.*

Kalmyks knew various meat dishes, but the most common was the "Sheln" meat broth (from the Kalmyk – "broth") without seasoning. Only from the middle of the XIX century. Under the influence of the Russian population, Kalmyks began to add a small amount of potatoes to soups, as well as onions and cabbage. Subsequently, these and other vegetables were gradually introduced into the Kalmyk cuisine, for example:

A: *When will the "shln" be ready?*

B: *I'll only throw potatoes and onions. Wait a bit.*

Q: *How much can you wait for this potato! The main thing is Makhanchik.*

Also, one of the exciting dishes is sausage (Kalmyk, "chikshn makhn"), prepared from straight rams stuffed with thinly cut flagella with a diaphragm and abdominal fat. The intestines of a horse or cow did not start but immediately cooked. The preparation of sausages has been known among the Mongols since the 13th century (Erdniev & Maksimov, 2007). Now the name "Chihksn Makhn" can often be found in dialogues of informants in a variety of situations:

A: *Please give me chiksn mahn!*

B: *Take it!*

A: *Chiksn mahn bəəny?* (in Kalmyk, "is")

B: *Bəəny. What is needed? Fatty?*

A: *Hello, give me the menu.*

B: *Take it!*

Q: *I will order a chiks mahn.*

A: *We have Chichen Makhn, but only Hoto.*

Q: *Fine, I will wait.*

A: *I will also be chiksn makhn, but only without filling.*

A: *"Village" is a good sausage!*

B: *I tried. I was not too fond of it because of one soy. Paper, not sausage!*

Q: *Try the Hepatic! Lick your fingers!!*

It should be noted that often in the dialogs of informants, the names of food are expressive: "fat, good, lick your fingers." Food items can also be emotionally evaluative: "I did not like it because it was soy, paper, not sausage."

The meat dish "burg" is also trendy among informants. The meat, crumbled into the smallest pieces, was wrapped in thinly rolled circles of dough and cooked in a cauldron. Now, some people make burg themselves, while others buy in finished packaging:

A: *Hello, can I have a "burg."*

B: *Of course! Do not sculpt yours?*

A: *No time!*

In addition to meat dishes, Kalmyks prepared flour and cereal dishes. Communication with Russians and other agricultural peoples increased the consumption of bread and flour dishes. According to P.-S. Pallas, in the second half of the XVIII century. Kalmyks bought bread and cereals from the Russians and "ate little of it." But, since the 30s. XIX century, when the Kalmyks gradually began to engage in agriculture, mostly Derbet ulus, the proportion of flour products in their diet increased (Erdniev & Maksimov, 2007). Also, flour dishes were prepared not only in everyday life but also in holiday situations, which researchers write about: "Every year during the Zul holiday Kalmyks prepare dough boats in which as many wicks are placed as there are people in the family" (Burykin et al., 2019). Now flour products are one of the favorite sweets of the Elistins:

A: *Boortsg is beyond praise!*

B: *Thank you!*

A: *Will you do Boortsg?*

B: *Of course, only the son wants Temən (from Kalmyk, camel).*

Q: *What a camel; it is necessary to do "Tosh," Zul after all.*

The favorite dish of Kalmyks was bulmag ("bulmg"), which was prepared as follows: at the bottom of a hot cauldron, butter, sour cream, cream, animals, and other fats were melted. Then they poured flour and, continuously stirring with a spoon, added slightly salted water. The result was a brewed mass – a very nutritious dish, which still exists among Kalmyks and Buryats (Erdniev & Maksimov, 2007). Such a dish can be found in the dialogs of the inhabitants of our city:

A: *Where is the bulmg?*

B: *Where? Not ready yet!*

Q: *Faster, I am hungry!*

G: *Mm, what a flavor!*

An analysis of informant dialogues showed that Kalmyk cuisine has become more sophisticated, more productive, and more diverse under the influence of Russian cuisine and other peoples. Besides, in addition to traditional Kalmyk dishes, the Elistins correctly prepare and eat meals of the cuisine of various nations, as well as give them their names. Classification by names and methods of preparation indicates this.

Boiled and stewed dishes: "Ratatouille," "Hedgehogs," Greek potato, Hungarian goulash, Azu, Chicken Teriyaki, Chicken Veneto, Fettuccine, Jambalaya, Meatballs in Elist style, Meat broth, Meat "Makhn Shultan," Dotr "(offal)," Budan "(soup), Lecho, Grandmother Magarych," "Makhn from saiga," "Meatballs."

Fried dishes: "French meat, Karisky meat, Burgundy meat, Veal chop, Roast beef, Christmas beef, Roast, schnitzel, Chicken tobacco, Handcuffs, stewed meat, Curry chicken with vegetables,"

Baked: "Millefeuille, Swallow's Nests, Peach, Shekerbour, Potato Casserole, Cure (Kalmyk, "meat in its own juice"), Turkey, French Duck, Pizza, "Sausages."

Fish dishes: "Fish soup, Halibut with vegetables, Eel in the sea, Carp and boiled Salmon, Belgian Fish, Astrakhan fish, Stuffed pike, Hake, Sazan in sour cream, Pollock cutlets, Fish in batter, Herring under a fur coat, Fish hodgepodge, dried Vobla. "

Salads: "Stepnoy, Elistinsky, Home, Caspian, Tulip, Cuckoo's Nest, Rustic, Lick Your Fingers, Enthusiasm, Black Pearl, Astra, Jade Bracelet, Ladies', Tiger cub, Russian."

Sweet and flour dishes: "Corners with raisins, Kalmyk loaf, Shortcake, Elistinsky apples, Bulmg, Hog-tosn (apples in sour cream), Okra, Brushwood."

Drinks: Zhomba, huursn tsi, chiidmg, stewed apricots and apples, strawberries, "Lotus."

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

This work aims to identify and study the linguistic and cultural features of food discourse in Russian colloquial speech of Kalmyks – residents of Elista. Food discourse is an important ethnic component of the people. Various ways of preparing Kalmyk national dishes, tea, as well as specific rituals associated with them are described. Dialogue texts of different genre orientations and situations of everyday and festive discourse are shown. The aspects of foreign cultural influence in the area of Kalmyk nutrition are investigated, caused by the development of modern society, various contacts with other peoples.

#### **5. Research Methods**

In work, various methods of linguistic analysis were used: descriptive, comparative with elements of quantitative analysis, methods of lingua-cultural analysis of Russian colloquial recordings, methods of direct observation, identification of the significant factor, and statistical calculation.

#### **6. Findings**

The article analyzes the information contained in the above examples of Russian colloquial speech of residents of the city of Elista. The description and analysis of the speech activity of the informants showed that various nominations represent food discourse as an object of lingua-cultural research. In the nominations, there is an emotional-evaluative vocabulary, as well as multiple ways of cooking, characterized by a national component in different communication situations. An analysis of the Russian colloquial speech of the Kalmyks allows concluding that food discourse has specific constituent components related to food consumption. Such constants are table etiquette, the behavior of informants in an informal setting, and a holiday situation. It should be noted that Kalmyk tea was and remains the most revered drink. It is with tea that morning begins in families; more than one holiday cannot do without it.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the study allows showing that the names of the semantic complex "food" are widely used in the Russian colloquial speech of residents of the city of Elista as a sign of the linguistic and cultural identity of the Kalmyks. The traditions of any ethnic group include both an indispensable component of culture, etiquette that regulates communication, and people's behavior with each other in everyday situations. The language, the uniqueness of traditions and customs, lifestyles, features of everyday life, and other social factors are distinguished by the great originality of the communicative behavior of Kalmyks. In various dialogical situations, characteristics of their implementation are characterized by great diversity and ethnocultural specificity. Kalmyk cuisine retained the traditional functions associated primarily with the nomadic way of life when the basis of cooking was recipes using large quantities of milk and meat. Meat and dairy dishes are now prevalent not only among Kalmyks but also among other nationalities. Even though Kalmyk cuisine has become much richer and more diverse, Kalmyks still try to adhere to traditional food preferences.

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