

# A Comparative Study of Idiomatic Expressions Related to Staple Foods in Korea and Türkiye: Rice and Bread

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## Abstract

This study aims to examine idiomatic expressions related to food culture in both Korean and Turkish from a contrastive linguistic and cultural perspective, with a focus on the staple foods of rice and bread. Previous contrastive studies of idiomatic expressions in Korean and Turkish have mostly focused on contrasting the meanings of idioms related to body parts or emotions, while there has been limited research on expressions associated with food culture. However, since staple foods play a crucial role in shaping a nation's cultural identity, investigating idiomatic expressions related to rice and bread offers valuable insights into the identities and thought patterns of both languages. By comparing and analyzing the lexical composition and meanings of major idiomatic expressions related to staple food culture, this study aims to elucidate the characteristics of idiomatic expressions, thereby enhancing the understanding of the linguistic and cultural nuances in both Korean and Turkish.

**Keywords:** contrastive linguistics, idiomatic expressions, lexical composition, meaning, intercultural communication

## Povzetek

Namen te raziskave je preučiti idiomatske izraze, povezane s kulturo prehrane v korejščini in turščini, s kulturnega vidika in vidika kontrastivnega jezikoslovja. Raziskava se osredotoča predvsem na idiome o osnovnih živilih, kot sta riž in kruh. Prejšnje kontrastivne študije idiomov v korejščini in turščini so se večinoma osredotočale na pomensko primerjavo idiomov o delih telesa ali čustvih, raziskave o idiomih, povezanih s kulturo hrane, pa ni bilo veliko. Ker imajo osnovna živila ključno vlogo pri oblikovanju nacionalne kulturne identitete, raziskovanje idiomatskih izrazov, povezanih z rižem in kruhom, ponuja dragocen vpogled v identiteto in miselne vzorce obeh jezikov. S primerjavo in analizo leksikalne sestave in pomenov glavnih idiomatskih izrazov, povezanih s kulturo osnovnih živil, želi ta raziskava razjasniti značilnosti idiomatskih izrazov in s tem izboljšati razumevanje jezikovnih in kulturnih odtenkov v korejščini in turščini.

**Ključne besede:** kontrastivno jezikoslovje, idiomi, leksikalna sestava, pomen, medkulturna komunikacija

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## 1 Introduction

Idiomatic expressions are closely related to the way human perceive the world, and examining these expressions can enhance our understanding of the society and culture associated with the target language. Both Koreans and Turks place significant importance on food, particularly staple foods such as rice and bread, intrinsically linked to concepts of life, death, and the value of an individual's existence. In Korean idioms, the phrase for a meal is the value of a person's existence, and 'putting down a spoon' means 'dead.' The Turkish idiom 'enemy of ekmek' has the meaning of 'a person who cannot properly realize the value of his or her existence by not working and relying on the efforts of others. Thus, rice and bread serve as crucial elements for understanding the thought processes and cultural values of Koreans and Turks, extending beyond mere linguistic expressions.

The purpose of this study is to explore the cultures and thought processes of both Korea and Türkiye through a contrastive analysis of idiomatic expressions related to staple foods in each language. Food culture is intrinsically linked to human survival; thus, examining related idiomatic expressions can reveal the identities of language users and provide insights into their respective cultures. This study particularly aims to enhance our understanding of the language and culture of students in Türkiye by comparing and analyzing idioms associated with staple foods in both Korean and Turkish, especially as the field of Korean language education has been rapidly developing in recent years. To achieve this goal, the study will discuss the universality and specificity of idiomatic expressions related to staple foods in Korean and Turkish from the perspective of contrastive analysis.

## 2 Idiomatic expressions and intercultural communication

Few things are as essential to human life as eating. In Korean, the word for 'life' is expressed as 'living,' which highlights that eating is not only fundamental to survival but is, in many ways, synonymous with it. A wide range of applications of the Korean word *meokda* 먹다 'to eat' and the Turkish word *yemek* 'to eat' further demonstrates the significance of eating. In Korean, the verb *meokda* 먹다 is typically used in contexts related to consuming food, as in 'I ate kimbap for lunch and then had fruit for dessert,' where it refers to the act of putting food into the mouth, chewing it, and swallowing.

However, the word also extends beyond the literal act of eating to figuratively mean things like *naireul meokda* 나이를 먹다 'growing older,' *kkulbameul meokda* 꿀밤을 먹다 'getting scolded,' *guksureul meokda* 국수를 먹다 'getting married,' or *pibuga hwajangeul jal meokda* 피부가 화장을 잘 먹다 'applying good makeup to the skin,' showing its extended and figurative use in idiomatic expressions.

In Turkish, there are similar idiomatic expressions that utilize the verb *yemek* 'to eat,' which combines with nouns to form expressions like *başını yemek* 'to eat one's head,' meaning 'to put someone in a very difficult situation,' *para yemek* 'to eat money,' meaning 'to waste money recklessly' or 'accepting a bribe,' and *haraç yemek* 'to eat land tax,' meaning 'to take something that does not rightfully belong to you.' These examples illustrate the broad range of applications for the verb 'to eat' in idiomatic expressions.

Idiomatic expressions are descriptive linguistic forms used to convey images, characteristics, and states of objects. These expressions link closely to the psychological traits and lifestyle habits shaped by the history, culture, and geographical environment of each nation or ethnic group. Although Korea and Türkiye are geographically distant, they share significant cultural commonalities and similarities. In most languages, food-related vocabulary constitutes some of the most fundamental lexicons, reflecting the fact that food is essential for human survival. Therefore, it is only natural that there are numerous food-related terms. Moreover, the perception of food varies by context and is reflected in distinct linguistic expressions, leading to idioms with figurative meanings.

The communicative competence of foreign language learners refers to their ability to engage in smooth interactions and convey ideas effectively with native speakers. A crucial aspect of this competence is understanding the target culture. Effective communication requires not only knowledge of the language but also awareness of the consciousness, attitudes, and values that individuals, societies, and groups have developed over time. Additionally, non-verbal behaviors, such as gestures and facial expressions, play a significant role. For instance, while Koreans shake their heads side to side to indicate disagreement, in Türkiye, people often tilt their heads backward to convey the same sentiment. This difference can lead to confusion for Koreans who are unfamiliar with the Turkish gesture when they first encounter it.

In other words, culture encompasses the entire way of life of an individual or a specific group. Intercultural communication refers to any situation in which people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds meet and interact, either verbally or non-verbally. Language serves as the

primary means of communication, conveying thoughts, emotions, and information between individuals while providing a framework for mutual understanding among people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Consequently, understanding a language necessitates an understanding of the characteristics and context of its associated culture. This suggests that communication can flow more smoothly when one is aware of the significance and meanings of specific vocabulary expressions within that culture.

In the field of foreign language education, Byram (1997) in his book *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence* developed the concept of intercultural communicative competence, which he defines as an ability to speak another language, build relationships, and communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds. He links this concept to the primary focus of foreign language teaching, known as 'communicative competence,' and introduces the notion of 'intercultural communicative competence.' In his work, Byram proposes a set of principles designed to help teachers cultivate learners' individual abilities, particularly in complex language skills. He emphasizes that understanding the nuances and context of language is essential for enhancing communication effectiveness, as the same word may be interpreted differently depending on the cultural context (Byram, 1997, pp. 34-37).

From his perspective, a person with intercultural communication skills is someone who can interact with individuals from different cultures using a foreign language. Such individuals can engage in smooth communication through various interaction methods and can effectively convey their thoughts to others. They can act as intermediaries among people from diverse cultural backgrounds. In other words, their understanding and knowledge of other cultures links closely to their linguistic ability to speak the target language appropriately. Consequently, they possess the capacity to comprehend and embrace new languages and cultures through their language acquisition skills (Byram, 1997, p. 71). When learning a foreign language, it is not enough to merely learn the usage patterns mentioned in its grammar and reading books and dictionaries, it is also necessary to know the culture of the society speaking that language, their social interaction habits, expressions to be used in different situations, reaction styles, ways of addressing, and behaviors (Bulut, 2013, pp. 561-562).

Following, teaching a foreign language is not only teaching the phonetics and morphology of that language, but also conveying the culture of the target language. Language and culture are interconnected, so culture must also be taught and learned (İşcan & Yassıtaş, 2018, p. 47). Besides, in

discussing the significance of the relationship between language and idioms in social interaction, Gibbs articulates the following:

“Idioms facilitate social interaction, improve text coherence, are an integral part of language, reflect patterns of human thought, and help people communicate. It conceptualizes events and expresses abstract ideas through idiomatic meanings rather than literal meaning alone. In other words, studying idiomatic expressions can reveal one aspect of human thinking and closely related to daily life in a specific language helps to understand the people who use that language and the society in which they live.” (Gibbs, 2012, pp. 697-707)

Communication barriers due to linguistic differences can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. Therefore, efforts are needed to minimize linguistic mistakes that may arise during interactions between speakers of different languages. Learning and understanding another person’s language can help build positive relationships and trust and further serve as a shortcut to breaking down cultural barriers.

In other words, because language reflects the values, beliefs, and customs of a specific culture in intercultural communication, understanding a particular language is essential for grasping the cultural background of its speakers. From this perspective, idiomatic expressions, which embody a society’s historical values and social norms, offer valuable insights into that society’s worldview and cultural identity. This makes idiomatic expressions a crucial factor in understanding the interaction between language and culture. In summary, since linguistic elements play a vital role in interactions among people from diverse cultural backgrounds, intercultural communication and studying the target language are complementary, facilitating more effective and seamless communication.

### **3 Previous studies and research method**

First and foremost, existing studies on idiomatic expression contrast underscore the necessity and significance of this research. With the rapid proliferation of the Korean language, driven by the influence of the Korean Wave and the growth of the Korean economy, various comparative and contrastive studies have been undertaken not only in China and Japan but also in Western languages such as Spanish, German, French, and English. Since much of the research has focused on body language and idioms that express emotions, there is a notable lack of studies comparing idiomatic expressions related to everyday life, such as eating habits.

Let us take a brief look at the research on dietary habits conducted in Korea and abroad. Baek and Mak (2010) analyzed the similarities and differences between Korean and Chinese food-related idiomatic expressions to enhance the understanding of these expressions for learners studying either language. Kim (2011) analyzed idiomatic expressions related to rice and rice cakes, derived from the staple food rice, within the broader food culture of both Japanese and Korean languages, from a comparative linguistic and cultural perspective. In a subsequent study, Kim (2012) classified Korean and Japanese food-related expressions into categories such as drinks, staple foods, and side dishes, discussing the perceptions of life and human relationships reflected in the idiomatic expressions of both countries. Seo and Zemanek (2014) contrasted expressions related to alcohol in Korean and Czech, highlighting the similarities and differences in cultural characteristics, value systems, and thought processes of the two nations. Kim, analyzed the commonalities and differences between Korean and Malay by selecting idiomatic expressions that include terms related to cooking methods and food ingredients (Kim et al., 2024). In a similar study conducted in Türkiye, Has and Atay (2020) examined the similarities and differences between Turkish and Japanese by contrasting the meanings of idioms and proverbs associated with the Turkish word *ekmek* 'bread' and the Japanese word *kome* 'rice.'

Previous contrastive studies of idiomatic expressions in Korean and Turkish have primarily focused on comparing the meanings of idioms related to body parts and emotional expressions, with limited research conducted on idiomatic expressions associated with food culture. However, as noted by Gibbs (2003, p. 367), food serves as a symbol that delineates a nation's culture and identity. Consequently, an examination of idiomatic expressions associated with staple foods in both countries can provide valuable insights into the identities and cognitive frameworks embedded within the two languages.

There have, however, been a few contrastive linguistics studies of idioms for native Korean or Turkish language students in an educational context. Türközü (2003) offers a comprehensive guide that compares Korean proverbs and idioms while also discussing some food-related expressions to benefit Turkish students. The author aims to explore the potential for Korean cultural education in Türkiye by providing educational content specifically designed for beginners who are new to the Korean language. Also, Türközü and Ferendeci (2004), in their study "Idioms Related to the Names of Body Parts, including 'Head' and 'Facial Organs' in Turkish and Korean" examined and compared idioms associated with head and facial organs such as the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth in both Turkish and Korean.

They identified similarities and differences among the idioms. A noteworthy conclusion of their study was that both languages contain numerous idiomatic expressions related to the head and facial organs, which exhibit similar meanings and patterns of expression.

Research on linguistic contrasts between Korean and Turkish has been conducted to a certain extent. Cho and Türközü (2020) in their comparative study analyzed the concepts of onomatopoeia and their linguistic functions in Korean and Turkish to reveal differences and commonalities.

Jeong, in her study "Comparative Study of Emotion Expressions in Turkish and Korean" (2020), examined the diverse ways in which emotions such as joy, love, sadness, anger, fear, and hatred are expressed in Korean and Turkish. By focusing on body-related expressions and comparing emotion-related idioms, she aimed to explore similarities and differences in emotional expression between the two languages. This study is valuable as it approaches the target cultures through idioms, offering a more systematic understanding of how emotions are conveyed in each country.

Surveying on idiomatic expressions in both countries, the Standard Korean Language Dictionary, published by the National Institute of the Korean Language, defines an idiomatic expression as a phrase used habitually. It explains that an idiom consists of two or more words whose combined meaning cannot be deduced from the individual meanings of the words, and it conveys a specific meaning. For instance, while 'having a wide foot' literally means 'having a physically large foot,' it is also used idiomatically to signify 'being sociable and knowing many people.'

The Turkish Dictionary defines an idiom as "a formulaic phrase or expression that usually carries an interesting meaning, more or less separate from its literal meaning" (Ayverdi, 2005, p. 517).

Leading scholars in both countries have also debated the definitions of idiomatic expressions. In Türkiye, Püsküllüoğlu defines an idiom as "a linguistic unit that functions as a single component within a sentence, characterized by an original expression that generally conveys a meaning different from the literal meanings of individual words." He further describes idioms as fixed forms of figurative expressions that have become established through habitual use, employing metaphorical meanings to convey concise and implicit ideas, thereby assisting speakers in grasping and understanding abstract concepts (Püsküllüoğlu, 2006, pp. 7-8). Özdemir defines an idiom as "a fixed and fossilized form of lexical art where words are often combined to convey a meaning different from their literal sense" (Özdemir, 2000, p. 6). According to Aksoy, idioms are formulaic expressions

composed of words that carry metaphorical meanings, which explain a situation, issue, or concept in a more aesthetically pleasing and engaging manner (Aksoy, 1993, p. 50). Demir states that “idioms are stereotyped phrases used to enhance the power of expression, often embodying irrational dreams and thoughts that transcend their literal meanings” (Demir, 2004, p. 612).

Moon (2022, p. 52) defines idioms as combinations of two or more lexical units that convey a specific semantic meaning and are structurally fixed. She classifies idiomatic expressions into broad and narrow definitions. The broad definition encompasses expressions that are habitually used and familiar to language users, including set phrases, proverbs, metaphorical expressions, direct and indirect speech acts, and conventional expressions that arise from euphemisms.

As indicated by dictionary definitions and scholarly interpretations in both countries, idiomatic expressions are unique phrases that have been habitually used and widely adopted. They reflect the historical, cultural, and social contexts of a nation and convey meanings that differ from their grammatical and logical interpretations and possess a fixed structure that cannot be easily dissected. Furthermore, idiomatic expressions are employed in a manner that reveals a new, third meaning, which is not merely the sum of the individual meanings of their components; at least one of the words within the idiom is utilized outside its literal context. Another characteristic of idiomatic expressions is the presence of stereotypes in their structures, which do not change readily.

Students are born into their native language and acquire it naturally as they grow. However, the target language is learned through deliberate methods for various purposes, such as communication, daily living, and knowledge acquisition. Regardless of whether a language is acquired naturally or artificially, the key to effective learning lies in understanding the cultural elements inherent in that language. Contrastive analysis offers the advantage of identifying unique characteristics by comparing and analyzing different languages. This approach enables learners to grasp the cultural nuances of the target language. Shim highlights the benefits of contrastive cross-linguistic analysis in her research by stating that, even if the language is in the same form, it can be communicated and interpreted differently depending on the situation and context, reflecting the shared cultural experiences of the speakers. As a research method for understanding implicit meanings, a contrastive study between languages that considers the learner’s native language and the culture behind it can be significant (Shim, 2009, pp. 268-269).



Heo and Kim, who have been actively conducting research in the field of contrastive linguistics in Korea, emphasizes the following research methods when comparing two or more languages:

“1) It must be clear which elements correspond to each other; 2) The terms and units of the items being compared must be described as uniformly as possible; 3) The commonalities and differences between languages must be identified, while also considering universality; 4) Consistency must be maintained in contrast with the primary language and the target language” (Heo & Kim, 2016, pp. 17-20).

Because idiomatic expressions related to rice and bread are closely tied to the cultural realities of both countries, this study selected widely used idiomatic dictionaries that demonstrate strong practical relevance. The idiomatic dictionaries referenced in this study are as follows. Korean Idiom Dictionary (Choi, 2017), the Dictionary of Korean Idioms (Park & Elliot, 2013), Turkish Idiom Dictionary (Püsküllüoğlu, 2006), Idiom Dictionary (Özdemir, 2000), and Idioms in Turkish (Aktaş, 2021). Additionally, online resources were utilized, such as the National Institute of the Korean Language’s Standard Online Dictionary,<sup>1</sup> the Korean Basic Online Dictionary,<sup>2</sup> and the Turkish Online Dictionary.<sup>3</sup> From these dictionaries, 30 idiomatic Korean expressions related to rice and 23 idiomatic Turkish expressions related to bread were commonly extracted and were utilized as primary data for contrastive research. In this study, the two languages exhibit distinct linguistic characteristics and identities, which are analyzed through a contrastive method that highlights their similarities and differences. From this perspective, this paper does not focus on the syntactic aspects of idiomatic expressions related to staple foods in Korean and Turkish; instead, it primarily addresses the semantic and cultural dimensions.<sup>4</sup>

As mentioned above, idiomatic expressions have been a fascinating topic for many researchers, leading to numerous discussions from various

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<sup>1</sup> <https://stdict.korean.go.kr/main/main.do>

<sup>2</sup> <https://krdict.korean.go.kr/m/kor>

<sup>3</sup> <https://sozluk.gov.tr/>

<sup>4</sup> Regarding the lineage of the Korean language, the current academic opinion is as follows. First, there is the argument that Korean is not included in Altaic because the lexical commonalities found in the Altaic language do not appear in Korean, and second, there is the view that Korean is included in Altaic due to phonological and grammatical similarities. Lastly, there is a negative view about the Altaic language family itself. This is due to the view that the linguistic commonality among the Altaic language family is significantly lower than that of other languages, making it difficult to view them as a common language family. (Heo, 2023, pp.13-14)

perspectives. However, research on idiomatic expressions between Korean and Turkish remains limited, and there is a notable absence of studies focusing on dietary idiomatic expressions in both languages. Furthermore, contrastive research on idiomatic expressions related to food habits is crucial for enhancing cultural communication skills. Therefore, in Chapter 4, I plan to compile and discuss idiomatic expressions related to staple foods in both countries.

## **4 Comparative analysis of idioms related to Korean *bap* 'rice' and Turkish *ekmek* 'bread'**

The food cultures that have developed alongside the natural environments of each country are deeply infused with the nation's culture, history, and way of life, making food one of the most effective and immediate keys to understanding a community. With this understanding, Chapter 4 will examine the linguistic and cultural characteristics of idiomatic expressions related to rice and bread, the staples of Korean and Turkish cultures, to explore the similarities and differences between the two.

### **4.1 Idiomatic expressions related to rice in Korea**

Although there are various perspectives on the origins of rice cultivation in Korea, it is believed that rice farming began around 2000 BCE during the late Neolithic period, based on rice grains discovered in the lower reaches of the Han River. Over 5,000 years, Koreans have preserved the traditions of a single ethnicity and an agricultural culture, embedding their unique traditional practices within their extensive historical narrative. Among these, food culture stands out as the most enduring of all traditions and customs, remaining one of the areas in daily life where traditional influences are most prevalent today. While modern Korean cuisine has been significantly influenced by Western dietary habits, Koreans continue to uphold a traditional meal structure in which rice serves as the staple, accompanied by a variety of side dishes.

Idiomatic expressions are closely tied to the lived experiences of native speakers. Many idiomatic expressions in Korean involve 'rice'. According to a frequency survey of Korean idiomatic expressions found in an idiom dictionary, expressions containing the word appear 31 times, making it the second most common food-related idiom after 'water,' with 39 occurrences (Choi, 2017).

This demonstrates that the vocabulary employed in idiomatic expressions related to food reflects the cultural identity and significance of certain elements in the lives of Koreans. The expression ‘Koreans live by the power of rice’ illustrates how deeply rice cultivation is embedded in Korean culture, symbolizing not only sustenance but also the foundation of national identity and cultural heritage.

The dictionary definition of 밥 *bap* ‘rice’ in Korean refers to cooked grains, and the medieval form of the word has remained unchanged. It can also be associated with early child language, such as ‘mamma’ (food), with variations like ‘bab,’ ‘bappa,’ and ‘papa,’ in the context of theories regarding the origins of language or stages of early language acquisition. In the Hamgyong dialect in Korea, rice is called ‘babu,’ which corresponds to the child’s word ‘bap.’ The Korean term 바보 *babo* ‘fool,’ meaning ‘a foolish or stupid person,’ originated from the combination of 밥 *bap* ‘rice’ and the suffix -보 *-bo*, which denotes a person, with the consonant ㅂ ‘b’ being dropped (Bae, 2018, p. 246).

Cheon (2007) emphasizes that the word 밥 *bap* ‘rice’ likely originated from terms related to eating and drinking, which later evolved into parental terms. Infants’ first words, such as ‘mamma’ or ‘bappa’ (often used when asking for food), naturally solidified as terms for parents. In other words, it is believed that the word for food, baba’ (meaning food) transformed into ‘bap’ (rice), which became the basis for the word for father, while ‘mamma’ or ‘mam’ evolved into the word for mother. The terms bap ‘rice’ and 맘 *mam* ‘food’ lost their initial nasal sounds ‘p/m’ and evolved into 압/업 ‘*ap/eop*’ and 암/엄 ‘*am/eom*,’ respectively. With the addition of various suffixes, these terms formed modern parental titles such as 아빠, 엄마, 아버지, 어머니 *appa, eomma, abeoji, eomeoni* ‘dad, mom, father, mother’ (Cheon, 2007, pp. 99-100).

Table 1: Idiomatic expressions related to the Korean staple rice

No.	Idiomatic exp. (Korean)	Meaning	Turkish translation
(1)	밥(을) 벌다 <i>bap(eul) beolda</i>	to earn a living through effort.	<i>pilavi kazanmak</i>
(2)	밥값 <i>bapgap</i>	the term worth or payment equivalent to the meal.	<i>pilav ücreti</i>
(3)	밥그릇 <i>bapgeureut</i>	a job or position for earning a living.	<i>pilav kasesi</i>
(4)	밥그릇을 축내다 <i>bapgeureuteul chuknaeda</i>	to live without doing any meaningful work.	<i>pilav kasesini azaltmak</i>

No.	Idiomatic exp. (Korean)	Meaning	Turkish translation
(5)	밥그릇 싸움 <i>bapgeureut ssaum</i>	a dispute to gain more money or power.	<i>pilav kasesi kavgasi</i>
(6)	밥줄이 끊어지다 <i>bapjuli kkeuneojida</i>	to lose one's means of livelihood.	<i>pilav hatti kesilmek</i>
(7)	밥통이 떨어지다 <i>baptongi tteoleojida</i>	to lose one's means of job	<i>pilav kutusu düşürmek</i>
(8)	밥 먹듯이 하다 <i>bap meokdeuti hada</i>	to do something frequently or easily as if eating rice.	<i>pilavi yer gibi</i>
(9)	밥알을 세다 <i>bapaleul seda</i>	to pick at food, not eating properly due to lack of appetite.	<i>pirinç tanelerini saymak</i>
(10)	밥술이나 뜨다 <i>bapsulina tteuda</i>	to live reasonably well, or to be able to afford food.	<i>bir kaşık pilavi yiyebilmek</i>
(11)	밥술깨나 먹다 <i>bapsulokkaena meokda</i>	to be well-off enough to not have to worry about food.	<i>bir şeyler yiyebilmek</i>
(12)	밥술(을) 놓다 <i>bapsul(eul) notda</i>	a colloquial expression meaning to die.	<i>kaşık bırakmak</i>
(13)	눈치밥(을) 먹다 <i>nunchitbap(eul) meokda</i>	to live uncomfortably, always being cautious of others.	<i>başkalarının gözün içine bakarak pilavi yemek</i>
(14)	튀밥 튀기다 <i>twibap twigida</i>	a slang term meaning to exaggerate.	<i>pirinç patlağı yapmak</i>
(15)	남의 밥에 눈독 들이기 <i>namui bape nundok deuligi</i>	to covet someone else's work.	<i>başkalarının pilavına göz dikmek</i>
(16)	밥 구경을 못하다 <i>bap gugyeong(eul) mothada</i>	to go hungry without eating any rice.	<i>pilavi görememek</i>
(17)	밥 구경(을)하다 <i>bap gugyeong(eul) hada</i>	to eat rice after a long time.	<i>pilavi görmek</i>
(18)	밥알이 곤두서다 <i>bapali gonduseoda</i>	to feel disgusted or offended.	<i>pirinç taneleri diken oluyor</i>
(19)	밥맛 떨어지다 <i>bapmat tteoleojida</i>	to be disgusted by someone's words or actions.	<i>pilavin tadini kıçirmek</i>

No.	Idiomatic exp. (Korean)	Meaning	Turkish translation
(20)	찬밥 더운밥 가리다 <i>chanbap deounbap garida</i>	to refer to someone in no position to be picky and being choosy about their situation.	<i>soğuk pilavi ve sıcak pilavi seçmek</i>
(21)	찬밥 신세 <i>chanbap sinse</i>	to be ignored or treated poorly.	<i>soğuk pilav durumu</i>
(22)	한 솥밥을 먹다 <i>han sotbapeul meokda</i>	to become like family.	<i>ayni tencereden pilavi yemek</i>
(23)	밥맛이다 <i>bapmatida</i>	to experience an extremely unpleasant feeling, as if losing one's appetite.	<i>pilavin tadi</i>
(24)	그 나물에 그 밥 <i>geu namule geu bap</i>	to say that people of similar nature or status is matched together.	<i>o sebzeyle o pilavi</i>
(25)	콩밥(을) 먹다 <i>kongbap(eul) meokda</i>	eat a prison meal.	<i>fasulyeli pilavi yemek</i>
(26)	짬밥을 먹다 <i>jjambapeul meokda</i>	to serve in the military or work in an organization.	<i>asker yemeği yemek</i>
(27)	철밥통 <i>cheolbaptong</i>	a job that guarantees job security and is almost impossible to be fired from.	<i>demirle yapılmış yemek kutusu</i>
(28)	낚시밥을 던지다 <i>naksitbapeul deonjida</i>	use seductive means to lure people	<i>balik yemi atmak</i>
(29)	나라밥을 먹다 <i>naratbapeul meokda</i>	work as a civil servant	<i>devletin pilavini yemek</i>
(30)	물고기 밥이 되다 <i>mulgogi bapi doeda</i>	drown in water	<i>suda boğulmak</i>

In expressions (1)–(7), such as 밥을 벌다 *bapeul beolda* 'to earn a living,' 밥줄 *bapjul* 'lifeline,' 밥그릇 *bapgeureut* 'rice bowl,' 밥통 *baptong* 'rice container' and 밥그릇 싸움 *bapgeureut ssaum* 'fight over rice bowls,' the term 'rice' conveys the fundamental concept of a specific task, income source, or job elements that are essential for sustaining one's livelihood.

In example (8), 밥 먹듯이 하다 *bap meokdeuti hada* 'to do something like eating rice' illustrates the frequent and repetitive nature of rice consumption in daily life, emphasizing the persistence of Koreans in routine tasks, as 'rice' symbolizes actions that are performed 'always' or regularly.

Examples (10) and (11), such as 밥술이나 뜨다 *bapsulina tteuda* 'to take a spoonful of rice' and 밥술 깨나 먹다 *bapsul kkaena meokda* 'to have eaten enough rice,' the spoon used for eating rice signifies a certain level of affluence or a comfortable lifestyle, suggesting that one is financially secure enough not to be concerned about food.

In expression (12), 밥술을 놓다 *bapsuleul notda* 'to lay down the spoon,' however, the spoon is used as a euphemism for death.

The phrase in (13), 눈칫밥을 먹다 *nunchitbapeul meokda*, can be translated literally as 'eating rice that is offered reluctantly,' keeping in mind the various inconveniences associated with the act of eating. This implies that the individual partaking in the meal is consistently attentive to and observant of the reactions of others.

(20), 찬밥 더운 밥 가리지 않다 *chanbap deoun bap gariji anda* 'to not distinguish between cold and hot rice,' conveys the urgency of a situation in which one cannot afford to be selective.

Expression in (21), 찬밥 신세가 되다 *chanbap sinsega doeda* 'to become cold rice,' utilizes the temperature of rice (cold) to describe a situation in which an individual is ignored or treated poorly. In this context, cold rice symbolizes an unwanted or neglected person who is excluded and not treated with kindness. Conversely, the Korean proverb 거지도 부지런하면 더운밥 먹는다 *geojido bujireonhamyeon deounbap meokneunda* 'even a beggar can eat hot rice if diligent,' uses 'hot rice' to represent respect and warmth, thereby contrasting sharply with the negative connotations associated with cold rice.

Example (22), 한솥밥을 먹다 *hansotbapeul meokda* 'to eat from the same pot of rice,' signifies a closeness akin to that of family, reflecting a strong sense of camaraderie within a group or community. The term 한솥밥 *hansotbap* 'one pot of rice' encompasses more than just rice; it symbolizes the bond that unites a family or group, representing shared affection. The phrase 한식구 한솥밥 *hansikgu hansotbap* 'one family, one pot of rice' is frequently used to describe workplace communities, promoting a sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization.

In (23), 밥맛이다 *bapmatida* means 'flavor of rice'. This phrase refers to the intrinsic flavor of rice, which can evoke an extremely unpleasant sensation akin to a loss of appetite.

In (24), 그 나물에 그 밥 *geu namule geu bap* is literally translated as ‘that vegetable with that rice,’ refers to individuals of similar status or level, suggesting something predictable, mundane and unremarkable.

Expression in (25), 콩밥을 먹다 *kongbapeul meokda* ‘to eat bean rice,’ refers to serving time in prison. This expression likely originates from the fact that inmates were historically served unappetizing bean rice while incarcerated. Such idiomatic expressions illustrate that the type and condition of rice can vary based on the emotional state or situation being described.

Example (26) is similar to (25). The phrase 짬밥을 먹다 *jjambapeul meokda* ‘to eat military rice’ also refers to living within a specific environment or organization. This expression metonymically uses the rice consumed in the military to describe life in the army.

The term in (27), 철밥통 *cheolbaptong* ‘iron rice container,’ is a somewhat sarcastic expression that refers to a secure job, such as a civil servant position, where one is guaranteed lifetime employment with minimal effort or stress. The negative connotation of 철밥통 *cheolbaptong* evolved from 밥통 *baptong* ‘rice container’ to 철밥통 *cheolbaptong* ‘iron rice container,’ symbolizing an individual who benefits without making a meaningful contribution.

(28), 낚싯밥을 던지다 *naksitbapeul deonjida* ‘to throw fishing rice,’ employs the term 밥 *bap* ‘rice’ to denote bait used for attracting fish. Metaphorically, 밥 *bap* signifies a method of enticing an individual. The idiomatic expression that serves as the antonym of this phrase, which conveys the idea of succumbing to temptation, is articulated as 낚싯밥에 걸리다 *naksitbape geolrida* ‘to be caught in a fishing rice’.

Example (29) is 나라밥을 먹다 *naratbapeul meokda* and means ‘to eat the nation’s rice’. The phrase ‘nation’s rice’ pertains to the obligation of serving the country in the role of a civil servant. The term 밥 *bap* ‘rice’ in ‘nation’s rice’ denotes a public official or civil servant, similar to its usage in 27). However, in contrast to the term ‘Iron rice container,’ it does not appear to carry a negative connotation.

Finally, (30) is 물고기 밥이 되다 *mulgogi bapi doeda* ‘to become fish’s rice’. The meaning of ‘becoming rice for fish’ is an idiomatic expression that means ‘drowning’ in water. This phrase is clearly different from that of ‘fishing rice’ in example (28). This pertains to a circumstance in which one or more individuals succumb to death by drowning.

Examining Korean idiomatic expressions related to rice reveals that they often carry negative connotations, suggesting traits such as being easily manipulated, foolishness, impatience, triviality, or selfishness in

professional contexts. Furthermore, expressions such as 밥맛 떨어지다 *bapmat tteoleojida* 'to lose one's appetite,' 밥맛이다 *bapmatida* 'to be unpleasant,' 눈치밥을 먹다 *nunchitbap(eul) meokda* 'to live with caution and fear,' and 찬밥 신세 *chanbap sinse* 'to be ignored or treated poorly' convey feelings of dislike or aversion towards others. Notably, more than half of these expressions possess negative connotations, while neutral expressions are relatively uncommon. Second, most of the idiomatic expressions in Table 1 are formed through metonymic extension. For example, 밥그릇 *bapgeureut* 'rice bowl' symbolizes a means of livelihood, 콩밥 *kongbap* 'bean rice' denotes prison, and 짬밥 *jjambap* 'military rice' refers to military service, 철밥통 *cheolbaptong* 'iron rice bowl' means of a secure work environment in which individuals will not be dismissed, irrespective of their capabilities, 낚시밥 *naksitbap* 'fishing rice' refers as a method of enticing. These examples demonstrate how these idioms are driven by metonymy, in which a part signifies the whole or a larger concept.

## 4.2 Turkish idiomatic expressions related to bread

In ancient civilizations, bread and food culture related to bread were inseparable. Through numerous historical excavations, it has been established that bread production dates to the Neolithic Age, originating in the southeastern region of Anatolia, an area abundant in grains, and subsequently spreading to Mesopotamia (Naskali, 2014, p. 157). Originally, the Turkish people, due to their nomadic lifestyle, consumed thin, unleavened bread that could be quickly cooked on iron plates and stored for extended periods. After settling in Anatolia, this process gradually evolved, and by the 19th century, the bread known as became the standard form.

Although there are no precise records regarding the origin of the word *ekmek* 'bread,' some theories suggest that the staple food that appears on every Turkish table regardless of wealth derives from the verb meaning plant grains. In the *Divan-ı Lugatı't-Türk*, the oldest surviving Turkish dictionary, it is associated with *emek* 'labor,' and in some regional dialects, variations like *emakh*, *etmah*, *itmek*, and *e'mek* are still in use (Zülfikar, 2012, p. 12).

Meanwhile, Naskali indicates that the form of the word *ekmek* 'bread' did not emerge until the 18th century and posits that the term is derived from the combination of *et* and *mek*, in accordance with the phonological and morphological rules of the Turkish language. At present, *et* refers to food that is closely associated with meat, while *mek* is interpreted as a



combination of 'soft' and the suffix *-mek*, which conveys the meaning of 'like something' (Naskali, 2014, pp. 347-375). Furthermore, it has been noted that there are a total of 397 variations of *ekmek* 'bread' in the history of Turkic languages, including *asak ekmek*, *adak ekmek*, and *afar ekmek*. Prior to the 18th century, the term *nan* was predominantly used instead of *ekmek* for bread, as evidenced by expressions such as *nan-i nohut*, *nan-i gevrek*, and *nan-i çakil* (Işın, 2022, pp. 117-125). In terms of frequency, *ekmek* 'bread' ranks second among food-related idioms, with 32 occurrences, following 'water,' which has 53 occurrences (Püsküllüoğlu, 2006; Özdemir, 2000; Akyalçın, 2012).

Table 2 below and the following subsection 4.3 will examine linguistic and cultural characteristics of idiomatic expressions related to *ekmek* 'bread,' a staple of Turkish culture, as well as the similarities and differences between the Turkish and Korean cultures.

Table 2: Idiomatic expressions related to the Turkish staple bread

No.	Turkish idiom	Idiomatic expression (Korean translation)	Meaning
(1)	<i>ekmeğine yağ sürmek</i>	빵에 기름을 바르기 <i>ppange gireumeul bareugi</i>	an unintended action that benefits someone else.
(2)	<i>ekmek çarpsın ki</i>	빵에 부딪히게 <i>ppange budithige</i>	a vow made to convince someone of the truth.
(3)	<i>ekmek aslanın ağzında</i>	빵이 사자 입에 <i>ppangi saja ipe</i>	a situation where earning a living has become extremely difficult.
(4)	<i>ekmek düşmanı</i>	빵의 적 <i>ppangui jeok</i>	a family member or person who contributes nothing to the household but only consumes.
(5)	<i>ekmek elden su gölden</i>	빵은 손에서, 물은 호수에서 <i>ppangeun soneseo, muleun hosueseo</i>	someone who lives idly off the income of others without doing anything.
(6)	<i>ekmek kاپisi</i>	빵의 문 <i>ppangui mun</i>	a job or livelihood (source of income).
(7)	<i>ekmek kavgası</i>	빵 싸움 <i>ppang ssaum</i>	continuous effort and hard work done to make a living.
(8)	<i>ekmek parası</i>	빵 값 <i>ppang gap</i>	money or income used to sustain livelihood.
(9)	<i>ekmek yemek</i>	빵을 먹는 <i>ppangeul meokneun</i>	to make a living.

No.	Turkish idiom	Idiomatic expression (Korean translation)	Meaning
(10)	eli ekmek tutmak	손으로 빵을 잡기 <i>soneuro ppangeul japgi</i>	to earn a living on one's own income.
(11)	ekmeğini taştan çıkarmak	돌에서 빵 찾기 <i>doleseo ppang chatgi</i>	to work extremely hard to earn a living in a difficult situation.
(12)	ekmeğinden olmak	빵을 잃다 <i>ppangeul ilda</i>	to lose one's job or be dismissed.
(13)	ekmeğinden etmek	빵을 앗아가도록 했다 <i>ppangeul atagadorok haetda</i>	to cause someone to lose their job.
(14)	açın gözü ekmek teknesinde olur	빵 운반 그릇에 눈을 뜨라 <i>ppang unban geureute nuneul tteura</i>	the idea that basic survival needs take priority over all other needs.
(15)	(birini) ekmeğini elinden almak	(누군가의) 빵을 빼앗다 <i>(nugungai) ppangeul ppaetda</i>	to fire someone from their job.
(16)	ekmeğine göz koymak: ekmeğine göz dikmek	빵을 유심히 쳐다보기 (빵에 눈독들이기) <i>ppangeul yusimhi chyeodabogi (ppange nundokdeuligi)</i>	to covet someone else's job.
(17)	ekmeği ile oynamak	빵으로 장난치기 <i>ppangeuro jangnanchigi</i>	to jeopardize or interfere with someone's livelihood or job.
(18)	tuz ekmek hakkı	소금과 빵에 대한 권리 <i>sogeumgwa ppange daehan gwonri</i>	a moral obligation to someone who has fed or helped you.
(19)	ekmeğini ayağıyla tepmek	발로 빵을 차기 <i>balro ppangeul chagi</i>	to reject or refuse a good opportunity without realizing its value.
(20)	ekmeğini kazanmak	빵을 벌다 <i>ppangeul beolda</i>	to earn a living through effort.
(21)	ekmeğine kuru, ayranına duru mu dedik?	빵을 보고 말랐다고, 아이란에게 희다고 말했나? <i>ppangeul bogo malratdago, airanege huidago malhaetna?</i>	a question asking if one has offended or upset the other person.

No.	Turkish idiom	Idiomatic expression (Korean translation)	Meaning
(22)	ekmek bedr'in, su hidir'in, yiyin kudurun, için kudurun	빵은 베드리의 것이고 물은 흐드리의 것, 먹고 놀고, 마시고 놀고 <i>ppangeun bedeuruiui geotigo muleun heudeuriui geot, meokgo nolgo, masigo nolgo</i>	a phrase used to mock someone living off others without making any effort.
(23)	ekmek çiğnemeyince yutulmaz	빵을 씹지 않고서 삼킬 수 없다 <i>ppangeul ssipji aneumyeon samkil su eopda</i>	you cannot earn money without working

In the above Table 2, idioms (5) through (17) and (20) such as *ekmek kapısı* 'bread's door,' *ekmek parası* 'bread money,' *ekmek teknesi* 'bread-carrying bowl,' *ekmek kazanmak* 'to earn bread,' and *ekmek kavgası* 'bread fight' indicate for Turks, bread is directly linked to work and labor, with a stronger association with livelihood than rice has in Korean idiomatic expressions. Additionally, phrase (3), *ekmek aslanın ağzında* 'bread is in the lion's mouth' signifies a situation in which earning money to sustain a living has become extremely difficult. In (4), *ekmek düşmanı* 'enemy of bread' refers to an individual who does not contribute financially to the family and only relies on its sources, the strong expression. In examples (11) and (23), *ekmeğini taştan çıkarmak* 'to make bread from stone' and *ekmek çiğnemeyince yutulmaz* 'you cannot swallow bread without chewing it,' respectively, illustrates that earning a living is not easy. In (12) and (13), bread is used synonymously with a job. Bread also represents a very important value in life. In the phrase *ekmeğini ayağıyla tepmek* 'kicking bread with your feet' in (19), *ekmek* 'bread' highlights the consequences of missing an important opportunity due to carelessness.

One of the common features found in both Korean idioms involving rice and Turkish idioms involving bread is their use of symbols for employment or means of livelihood. In Korean, the concept of a job is represented by terms such as in the example (3) from Table 1, *bapgeureut* 밥그릇 'rice bowl' analogous to the example (14) from Table 2, 'bread bowl' in Turkish. Both terms share the commonality of 'containing' something, which serves as a means of livelihood. Example (6) from Table 1, *bapjul* 밥줄 'lifeline' that is similar to example (6) from Table 2, *ekmek kapısı* 'bread's door,' signifies an occupation or workplace in Turkish. Both example (2) from Table 1, *bapgap* 밥값 'price of rice' and example (8) from Table 2, *ekmek parası* 'price of bread'

refer to the income earned through effort. The expressions *bapjuli kkeuneojida* 밥줄이 끊어지다 'lifeline is cut' (example (6) from Table 1) and *ekmeğinden olmak* 'to lose one's bread' (example (12) from Table 2) both signify losing one's job or being dismissed. On the other hand, example (6) from Table 1, *bapjuleul kkeunda* 밥줄을 끊다 'to cut someone's lifeline' and example (15) from Table 2, *ekmeğini elinden almak* 'to take away someone's bread' mean to fire or dismiss someone. The Turkish phrase (16) from Table 2, *ekmeğine göz dikmek* 'to eye someone's bread' corresponds to the Korean phrase (15) from Table 1, *namui bapgeureute nundok deuligi* 남의 밥그릇에 눈독 들이기 'to covet someone else's rice bowl'. They both indicating a desire for someone else's job. Phrase (1) from Table 1, *bap(eul) beolda* 밥(을) 벌다 'to earn rice through effort' is frequently employed in everyday life with a meaning synonymous to example (20) from table 2, *ekmeğini kazanmak* 'to earn a bread through effort'. Finally, phrase (4) from Table 1, *bapgeureuteul chuknaeda* 밥그릇을 축내다 'loss of rice bowl' presents an action which results in the loss of food while engaging in consumption without contributing to any productive effort. This concept is analogous to the Turkish idiom (4) in Table 2, *ekmek düşmanı* 'enemy of bread' although the form is different.

### 4.3 Cultural feature of rice and bread

Both Koreans and Turks have long regarded rice and bread as sacred, making them significant elements in folk beliefs. In Korean culture, rice represents more than just a simple meal; it embodies the concept of interconnection among individuals. The term (22) in Table 1 *hansotbapeul meokda* 한술밥을 먹다 'eat rice from one pot' which signifies a communal dining experience. This phrase suggests that pot rice is not just the rice itself. It symbolizes a shared meal that unites the hearts of family members, fostering a sense of togetherness and community.

In traditional Korean culture, rice is regarded as more than a mere grain; it holds significant cultural and spiritual value. Historically, rice has been an integral component of various ceremonies conducted by Koreans, serving to address the challenges associated with significant life events such as birth, marriage, and funerals. During these rites of passage, rice has played a multifaceted role. It is utilized as a food offering to pray for the longevity of both the infant and the mother, as well as a medium through which individuals communicate with and honor their ancestors during ancestral ceremonies. Furthermore, rice is considered a valuable offering for the deceased. Following the ritual, rice soaked in water, known as 'Banham,' is traditionally scooped three times with a willow spoon and placed in the mouth of the deceased (Jeong, 2018, pp. 327-328). This act symbolizes the

provision of sustenance for the journey to the afterlife. Consequently, rice *bap* and the rice offered during each rite of passage—from birth through growth to death—are perceived as symbols of good fortune and prosperity (Shin & Sohn, 2008, pp. 350-351).

The fact that in Table 2, the term (2), *ekmek çarpsın ki*, which means that people swear 'on bread' to assure others of their honesty, demonstrates that Turks have long regarded bread as sacred. Consequently, bread has played a significant role not only in folk beliefs but also in major life rituals such as birth, marriage, and death, thereby preserving and developing the identity of the community. The term which remains prevalent in everyday language, translates to seeing bread, disloyalty to the individual who provides bread. Since the Ottoman era, the phrase (18), *tuz ekmek hakkı* 'the right to bread and salt,' has also appeared in numerous literary works, representing loyalty and hospitality. In this context, both salt and bread symbolize loyalty' within the social order, indicating that individuals who share the same food at the same table forge friendships (Samancı, 2022, pp. 145-146).

Before bread became the staple food in Türkiye, Turks traditionally made and consumed a type of bread called *nan*, borrowed from Persian, which is still widely enjoyed in Uzbekistan today. Another name for this bread is *nan-ı aziz*, meaning 'sacred bread,' indicating that Turks have long revered bread as sacred. Even in the Turkish dictionary of the Ottoman period, the word *nanpare*, which translates to 'a piece of bread,' also signifies working and living for a livelihood (Nihat, 1979, p. 651). The word *ekmek* 'bread' held sacred value during the Ottoman period. It was regarded as the most fundamental blessing that should never be wasted. It was believed that leaving a piece of bread or spilling bread crumbs after a meal was a sin that could lead to misfortune. A book on ethics from the Ottoman era states the following regarding the proper attitude toward bread: "To avoid wasting bread, even the crumbs that fall on the table must be collected and consumed. Eating the crust of bread while leaving the inside behind is disrespectful and may result in drought or rising prices. By tradition, bread is to be torn apart with both hands, as cutting it with one hand is considered impolite. Bread should not be cut with a knife. Furthermore, sharing the same bread is an act that symbolizes camaraderie and trust (see Cunbur, 1990, pp. 33-35).

Another example that bread was regarded as sacred dates back in the 17th century bakery, where dough workers were required to step on the dough to prepare bread. Following traditional practices, they would visit the nearest bathhouse every morning to perform a full body washing ritual named *gusul*, as they believed that bread was a sacred blessing.

Consequently, this ritual had to be performed before stepping on the dough (Yasin, 2022, p. 260). Bread was also used symbolically as a form of incantation and in folk remedies. Abdülaziz and Arisan, who documented the social and cultural life of Istanbul at the end of the 19th century, explain how bread was incorporated into ceremonies associated with folk religion. It played a role in significant rituals, such as childbirth and circumcision, and was also utilized in folk medicine as a remedy for the *kem göz* 'evil eye'. He documented the customs and folk rituals of the Ottoman period, noted that when a mother was about to give birth, the midwife would place a piece of bread in a corner of the room where the delivery was taking place to ward off malevolent spirits. Following this, the bread was distributed to animals outside the home in accordance with Islamic rituals. Additionally, on the 40th day after the birth, guests were invited, and a series of celebratory ceremonies were conducted. As a concluding ritual, when the guests departed, several pieces of bread were torn into small portions and passed around the heads of the mother and her child three times. In the end, the pieces were given to dogs on the street (Abdülaziz & Arisan, 2023, pp. 25-49).<sup>5</sup>

However, the term can also carry a negative connotation, as exemplified by the word *nankör*, a combination of *nan* 'bread' and *kör* 'blind,' which means 'ungrateful person' (Ayverdi, 2005, p. 2300). The term *nankör* is derived from *nan-kur*, which refers to a person who disregards the value of the sustenance received from others. It is also synonymous to an individual who is ungrateful. Additionally, the Hadith—a record of the words and actions of Muhammad, recognized as a significant source of Islamic teachings alongside the Quran—emphasizes the importance of expressing gratitude for the good deeds of others, further elucidating the concept of *nankör*. One hadith states,

"He who is not grateful for a little will not be grateful for much. He who is ungrateful to others is ungrateful to Allah. Always remembering Allah's blessings is an expression of gratitude, while disregarding them is *nankörlük* (the noun form of *nankör*)" (Islam Ansiklopedisi, 2006, pp. 382-389).

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<sup>5</sup> Also, according to Islamic traditions, when a boy reaches a certain age, a circumcision ceremony is performed. The day following the circumcision, to promote a swift recovery, *ekmek* (bread) is divided into several pieces and placed at the head of the bed where the boy sleeps, after which it is given to the dogs (Abdülaziz & Arisan, 2023, p. 72).

## 5 Conclusion

Although idioms may sometimes appear illogical and ungrammatical, they represent a unique form of vocabulary that facilitates fluent communication among people. Idioms often carry original background stories and can be more expressive than standard word expressions, reflecting the culture of the speakers. Without prior knowledge of the subject matter, understanding idioms can be challenging, creating significant barriers to effective communication and hindering a satisfying linguistic experience.

Idiomatic expressions are fixed phrases that have become deeply embedded in a language community through extensive usage. This can pose challenges for non-native speakers who may lack the cultural context necessary to grasp their meanings, as understanding these expressions requires more than just a literal interpretation of the words. Consequently, this study aims to assist learners from both countries, as well as those interested in cultural nuances, in gaining a deeper understanding of the target language and its associated culture. Additionally, it seeks to serve as a valuable resource for advanced vocabulary learners engaged in translation and interpretation.

Idiomatic expressions do not merely combine the literal meanings of their components. They also convey the figurative meaning of the entire phrase. Native speakers, immersed in their culture and language from birth, typically do not encounter significant difficulties in understanding idiomatic expressions during communication. In contrast, non-native speakers often feel confused and struggle with communication when they first encounter idioms in a foreign language. From this perspective, learning idioms is crucial for helping non-native speakers attain a higher level of proficiency in the target language.

This study examined the patterns and characteristics of idiomatic expressions related to rice and bread, which are staple foods in the culinary cultures of Korea and Türkiye. A common feature identified in the idiomatic expressions for rice and bread in both Korean and Turkish is their use as symbols of essential income sources or means of livelihood. More importantly, it is evident that both nations share a core value in their food culture, which fosters emotional connections within the social community and is passed down through their traditional culinary practices. For instance, the Korean idiom *hansotbap hansikgu* 한솥밥 한식구 'one family one pot of rice' conveys respect for others and signifies spiritual abundance, suggesting that rice embodies notions of emotional and communal well-being.

Similarly, in Türkiye, bread is traditionally torn apart with both hands rather than cut with a knife. Besides, sharing the same bread is an act that symbolizes camaraderie and trust. As illustrated by the folk belief, bread transcending its material nature makes people believe that those who break bread multiple times at the table will have many children. This belief, along with the concept of *tuz ekmek hakkı* 'the right of salt and bread' or the act of sharing bread and salt, serves as a powerful expression of friendship and trust among people and highlights the importance of a balanced social life through sharing and caring for others. In essence, these traditions reflect social identity and foster a sense of belonging, indicating that shared meals strengthen social bonds and promote unity. These idiomatic expressions from both countries reveal that Korea and Türkiye reject the individualism prevalent in modern society and instead embrace the cultural values of traditional sharing and harmony.

Another linguistic commonality is that idiomatic expressions in both languages often employ metonymy, where a part represents the whole. For instance, rice and bread symbolize jobs, values, and occupations, underscoring this metonymic characteristic. Additionally, a shared cultural feature is that both Koreans and Turks have long regarded rice and bread as sacred, making them significant elements in folk beliefs. If teachers and learners of idiomatic expressions in a foreign language comprehend and apply the conceptual meanings and cultural contexts embedded in the target language, it will not only enhance their ability to understand idiomatic expressions but also positively influence their overall language proficiency.

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