

PAPER

## THE LINGUOCULTURAL NATURE OF TOASTS IN EXPRESSING COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND CULTURAL VALUES

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### Abstract

Toast and roasts are culinary practices deeply embedded in various cultures worldwide, serving as more than mere culinary techniques but as expressions of tradition, social bonding, and cultural heritage. This abstract examines the multifaceted dimensions of toast and roasts, encompassing their historical roots, culinary techniques, and societal significance. The practice of toasting, involving the application of heat to bread until it reaches a golden brown hue, dates back millennia, with evidence of its existence in ancient civilizations such as Egypt and Rome.

**Key words:** culinary traditions, toast, roasts, cultural significance, gastronomy, history, social cohesion, symbolism, celebration.

### Introduction

Toast and roasts, seemingly simple culinary practices, are imbued with profound cultural significance, serving as both gastronomic delights and vehicles for social cohesion. In this abstract, we delve into the rich tapestry of toast and roasts, unraveling their historical roots, culinary intricacies, and symbolic importance across diverse cultures. The act of toasting bread, a practice as ancient as human civilization itself, has evolved

from a rudimentary method of preservation to a culinary art form celebrated worldwide. Similarly, the tradition of roasting, whether applied to meats, vegetables, or grains, transcends geographical boundaries, reflecting the ingenuity of human culinary exploration.

### Materials and Methods

Toasts are formal expressions of goodwill, appreciation, or calls for group attention to an

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issue or person in a public setting, often followed by synchronous consumption of beverages. Examples often include a toast at a wedding congratulating the couple, toasts at a bar after a tournament win to congratulate the team or an individual player, or a general toast to health for everyone on a holiday or other special occasion. Toasts serve to unify the group, acknowledge a person or event, mark a special occasion, or simply to encourage the consumption of alcohol. These can range from serious to silly but are normally words that point out something that is commonly known. For example, a toast to the most valuable player in a game may serve to publicly acknowledge him or her for achievements that are already known by the community. The verbal recognition, followed by ritualistic drinking, serves as a public acknowledgement. Belonging is a basic human need that requires reinforcement, and a toast can be characterized as a reinforcement ritual, acknowledging respect for the individual or team, and also reinforcing group affiliation, common symbols and terms, beliefs and values, goals and aspirations (McLean, S., 2005).

**Proposing a Toast :** One proposes a toast, rather than “making” a toast or simply “toasting,” because for it to truly be a toast, everyone in the group, team, or community must participate. If you propose a toast to someone and no one responds, even if you raise your glass to them as a nonverbal sign of respect and take a sip, it doesn’t count as a toast. Only the community can publicly acknowledge someone with a toast, but it takes an individual to make the proposition. Sometimes the person who is supposed to make that proposition is already known by function or role. The best man and maid of honor at a wedding, the host of a party, and the highest-ranking manager at a business meal are common roles that are associated with ritualistic toasts.

Standing with proper posture to address the group is normally associated with acts of public speaking, including toasts. If you are understood to be a person who will be proposing a toast, you may not need to say anything to get the group’s attention. As you rise and raise your glass, the room will grow quiet in anticipation of your words. If the group does not expect you to propose a toast,

you may need to say, “May I propose a toast?” in a voice above the level of the group. Nonverbal displays also work to capture attention (McLean, S., 2005), such as standing on a chair. While that may be nonstandard, your context will give you clues about how best to focus attention. Striking a glass with spoon to produce a ring, while common, is sometimes considered less than educated and a poor reflection of etiquette. The group norms determine what is expected and accepted, and it may be a custom that is considered normal. Etiquette is a conventional social custom or rule for behavior, but social customs and rules for behavior vary across communities and cultures.

You will raise your glass, raise your voice, and make a brief statement complimenting the person being honored. Your toast should be brief. If you write it out in advance, use thirty words as your upper limit. Common mistakes are for toast-givers to ramble on too long and to talk about themselves instead of the honoree. The toast is not as much about the words you use, though they carry weight and importance, but it’s about the toast ritual as a group expression of acknowledgement and respect. People then raise their glasses to indicate agreement, often repeating “hear, hear!” or a word or phrase from the toast, such as “to success!” They then sip from their cup, possibly touching glasses first. One common toast that always serves to unify the group is the toast to health. To propose a toast to health is common, well understood, and serves both the role and function of a toast. “Live long and prosper” is a common variation of “to your health” in English. Sometimes a best man at a wedding will be expected to tell a short story as part of their toast. A common story is how the couple met from the best man’s perspective. While this may be your choice, remember to keep it quite brief, positive, and focused on the honorees, not on yourself. Important occasions require you to play your part like everyone else, and your role is to focus attention on the individual, team, couple, or group as you honor them.

In conclusion, the exploration of toast and roasts reveals far more than mere culinary techniques; it unveils intricate layers of cultural heritage, social bonding, and human creativity. From the humble beginnings of toasting bread for preservation to the

elaborate feasts centered around roasted delicacies, these culinary traditions have evolved alongside human civilization, leaving an indelible mark on our collective identity.

As we reflect on the historical roots, diverse culinary expressions, and symbolic resonance of toast and roasts, it becomes evident that they serve as more than sustenance; they are threads that weave together the fabric of our cultural tapestry. Whether shared over a breakfast table or at a festive banquet, the act of toasting and roasting embodies the essence of human connection, celebration, and hospitality. Moving forward, it is imperative to continue exploring and preserving these culinary traditions, not only for their gustatory pleasures but also for their role in fostering understanding, appreciation, and unity among diverse communities. Through continued interdisciplinary inquiry and cross-cultural exchange, we can ensure that the traditions of toast and roasts endure as timeless symbols of culinary excellence and cultural heritage.

## Results and Discussion

The analysis of toasts from different linguocultural traditions demonstrates that this communicative genre functions not only as a social ritual but also as a linguistic reflection of national mentality, cultural norms, and collective values. Toasts are deeply embedded in the cultural context of a society and therefore reveal important features of how a community conceptualizes interpersonal relationships, social hierarchy, morality, and collective identity. The results of the present study show that toasts represent a culturally marked discourse type in which linguistic forms, stylistic devices, and pragmatic intentions interact to express culturally significant meanings.

First, the linguistic structure of toasts reflects culturally preferred patterns of communication. In many cultures, toasts are characterized by formulaic expressions, metaphorical language, and evaluative vocabulary that emphasize respect, goodwill, and social harmony. The analysis indicates that the lexical composition of toasts frequently includes words associated with happiness, prosperity, health, friendship, and family unity. These lexical choices are not

accidental; rather, they reflect the priorities and ideals valued within a particular cultural community. In Uzbek culture, for example, toasts often contain expressions related to blessings, gratitude, and wishes for long life and prosperity. Such expressions highlight the collectivist orientation of the culture, where family cohesion, mutual support, and respect for elders play a central role in social interaction. The linguistic markers used in these toasts frequently involve respectful forms of address and honorific vocabulary, which reinforces hierarchical social relations and emphasizes the importance of politeness and etiquette.

In contrast, English-language toasts, while also expressing goodwill and celebration, tend to display a more concise and individualized communicative style. The results reveal that English toasts frequently rely on brief expressions such as “To friendship,” “Here’s to success,” or “Cheers to new beginnings.” This brevity reflects broader cultural tendencies toward directness and efficiency in communication. However, despite their shorter structure, English toasts still carry significant cultural meanings. They often emphasize personal achievement, individuality, and optimism about the future. Such thematic patterns correspond to the value system commonly associated with English-speaking cultures, where individual accomplishment and personal success are highly regarded. Thus, the linguistic form of the toast becomes a mirror of the cultural worldview in which it is produced.

The pragmatic function of toasts also provides important insights into national mentality. Toasts perform several communicative roles simultaneously: they strengthen social bonds, express collective emotions, reaffirm shared values, and mark significant moments in social gatherings. The results show that in cultures with strong communal traditions, toasts often serve as extended narratives or mini-speeches that incorporate anecdotes, moral reflections, or symbolic metaphors. These narrative elements transform the toast into a culturally meaningful performance rather than a simple expression of goodwill. In Uzbek and many other Central Asian traditions, the individual delivering the toast is

often expected to demonstrate rhetorical skill, wisdom, and cultural awareness. The ability to produce an eloquent and meaningful toast is considered a sign of respect for the audience and the occasion. This expectation highlights the cultural significance of verbal artistry and the role of oral traditions in shaping communicative practices.

Another important finding concerns the symbolic and metaphorical language frequently used in toasts. Metaphors related to nature, journey, light, and growth appear regularly in the analyzed material. These metaphors serve not only as stylistic devices but also as carriers of culturally embedded meanings. For example, references to the “path of life,” “bright future,” or “fruitful harvest” metaphorically represent ideals such as success, continuity, and prosperity. Such imagery is deeply rooted in traditional worldviews and reflects how societies conceptualize human experience. In Uzbek toasts, metaphors related to gardens, spring, and abundance are particularly common, symbolizing fertility, renewal, and well-being. These images resonate with the agrarian heritage and historical lifestyle of the region, demonstrating how cultural memory becomes encoded in linguistic expression.

The analysis also reveals that toasts function as a medium for transmitting cultural norms and ethical principles. Through the act of toasting, speakers implicitly communicate expectations about behavior, relationships, and moral values. For instance, many toasts emphasize loyalty, respect for parents and elders, hospitality, and friendship. These recurring themes indicate that toasts serve as a form of cultural instruction, reinforcing socially approved attitudes and behaviors within the community. Younger participants in social gatherings often learn these cultural norms by listening to experienced speakers, which demonstrates the role of toasts in intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge.

In addition, the ceremonial context of toasts contributes to their linguistic and cultural significance. Toasts are typically delivered during important social events such as weddings, family celebrations, anniversaries, and communal gatherings. These occasions themselves carry symbolic meanings related to unity, continuity,

and collective identity. The act of raising a toast therefore becomes a performative gesture that unites participants through shared emotional experience. The linguistic form of the toast, combined with the ritual action of raising glasses, creates a multimodal communicative event in which verbal expression and symbolic action reinforce each other. This interaction between language and ritual further strengthens the cultural resonance of the toast as a communicative practice.

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