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**THE REPRESENTATION OF LINGUOCULTURAL UNITS—IDIOMS AND
FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS—IN UZBEK–ENGLISH EDUCATIONAL
DICTIONARIES**

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Abstract: This study examines the lexicographic representation of linguocultural units, particularly idioms and figurative expressions, in Uzbek–English educational dictionaries, the research focuses on the interaction between language and culture in bilingual lexicography, special attention is given to the problems of semantic equivalence, cultural asymmetry, and pedagogical adaptation, the paper analyzes the strategies used to present culturally marked expressions, including functional equivalents, descriptive explanations, and contextual examples, the role of cognitive and cultural linguistic approaches in the semantization of idioms is emphasized, the findings indicate that effective representation of linguocultural units requires an interdisciplinary, user-oriented, and corpus-based approach, the study contributes to improving the quality of Uzbek–English learner’s dictionaries and enhancing intercultural communicative competence.

Keywords: linguocultural units, idioms, figurative expressions, educational dictionaries, Uzbek–English lexicography, bilingual lexicography, lexicographic semantization, cultural asymmetry, semantic equivalence, language and culture.

In contemporary linguistics, the intersection of language and culture has become one of the most intensively explored areas of research. Language is no longer viewed merely as a neutral system of signs for communication; rather, it is understood as a repository of cultural knowledge, historical experience, social values, and collective worldview. Within this paradigm, linguocultural units—including idioms, figurative expressions, metaphors, and culturally marked phraseological constructions—occupy a central position. These units encapsulate culturally specific meanings that extend beyond literal interpretation and pose significant challenges for language description, translation, and lexicography. Bilingual educational dictionaries, particularly Uzbek–English learner’s dictionaries, serve as crucial mediators between languages and cultures. Their primary function is not only to provide lexical equivalents but also to facilitate intercultural competence and pragmatic understanding for language learners. In this context, the lexicographic presentation of linguocultural units becomes especially important. Idioms and figurative expressions are deeply embedded in national culture, cognitive patterns, and historical traditions; therefore, their accurate representation in dictionaries requires sophisticated semantic, pragmatic, and cultural analysis. Uzbek and English belong to different language families and cultural traditions, which results in substantial divergence in their conceptual systems. Uzbek, as a Turkic language, reflects a worldview shaped by nomadic heritage, agrarian life, communal values, and Eastern cultural norms. English, as



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a Germanic language with extensive Romance influence, reflects Western philosophical traditions, individualism, and a long history of global interaction. These differences manifest themselves most vividly in idiomatic and figurative language, where meaning is often culture-specific and resistant to direct translation.

One of the central challenges in Uzbek–English educational lexicography is the lexicographic representation of linguocultural asymmetry. Many Uzbek idioms and figurative expressions do not have direct equivalents in English, and vice versa. In such cases, lexicographers must decide whether to provide functional equivalents, descriptive explanations, paraphrases, or culturally adapted translations. Each strategy has implications for semantic accuracy, pedagogical effectiveness, and cultural authenticity. Furthermore, educational dictionaries differ fundamentally from general-purpose or scholarly dictionaries in their target audience and communicative goals. Learner’s dictionaries are designed to support language acquisition, vocabulary development, and communicative competence. Therefore, the presentation of linguocultural units must be accessible, systematic, and pedagogically motivated. Overly literal translations may confuse learners, while excessive cultural explanations may overwhelm them. Achieving a balance between linguistic precision and pedagogical clarity is one of the key tasks of lexicographic semantization in educational dictionaries. Idioms and figurative expressions are particularly problematic for language learners because their meanings cannot be deduced from the meanings of individual components. For example, Uzbek figurative expressions rooted in traditional customs, folklore, or religious beliefs often require background cultural knowledge for proper interpretation. When such expressions are included in Uzbek–English learner’s dictionaries without adequate explanation, learners may misinterpret their meaning or use them inappropriately in communication. From a theoretical perspective, the study of linguocultural units in lexicography draws on multiple linguistic disciplines, including phraseology, cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics, semantics, and pragmatics. Cognitive linguistics, in particular, provides valuable insights into how figurative meanings are structured through conceptual metaphors and metonymy. These theoretical frameworks enable lexicographers to identify underlying conceptual models that shape idiomatic meaning and to represent them more systematically in dictionary entries. In recent years, the growing influence of cultural linguistics has further emphasized the importance of cultural conceptualizations in language description.

Cultural schemas, cultural metaphors, and cultural categories play a decisive role in the formation of idioms and figurative expressions. Uzbek linguocultural units often reflect collective experiences related to family relations, hospitality, moral values, and social hierarchy. Representing these units in Uzbek–English educational dictionaries requires sensitivity to both linguistic form and cultural content. Another important factor influencing modern lexicography is the development of corpus-based approaches. Corpora provide empirical data on frequency, contextual usage, collocational patterns, and pragmatic functions of idioms and figurative expressions. However, many existing Uzbek–English educational dictionaries still rely on traditional intuition-based methods and lack



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systematic corpus support. This limitation affects the accuracy and relevance of dictionary entries, particularly in the case of culturally marked expressions.

The present research focuses on the lexicographic representation of linguocultural units—specifically idioms and figurative expressions—in Uzbek–English educational dictionaries. The study aims to analyze how these units are selected, semantically interpreted, translated, and explained for learners. It examines the extent to which cultural meaning is preserved or adapted and evaluates the effectiveness of existing lexicographic strategies from both linguistic and pedagogical perspectives. The analysis of the representation of linguocultural units—specifically idioms and figurative expressions—in Uzbek–English educational dictionaries demonstrates that this area of lexicography occupies a critical position at the intersection of language, culture, and pedagogy. The findings of the study confirm that linguocultural units are not merely stylistic or expressive elements of language but fundamental carriers of cultural knowledge, collective experience, and national worldview. Consequently, their lexicographic treatment requires a multidimensional and theoretically grounded approach that goes beyond direct lexical equivalence. One of the principal conclusions of this research is that linguocultural asymmetry between Uzbek and English significantly influences the effectiveness of dictionary representation. Many Uzbek idioms and figurative expressions are deeply rooted in cultural practices, moral values, historical memory, and social relations that do not have direct counterparts in English. In such cases, literal translation proves insufficient and may even result in semantic distortion.

Educational dictionaries that rely exclusively on word-for-word equivalents fail to convey the pragmatic and cultural meaning of these units, thereby limiting learners' communicative competence. The study also reveals that the pedagogical orientation of Uzbek–English learner's dictionaries necessitates a careful balance between linguistic accuracy and explanatory clarity. While scholarly dictionaries may prioritize exhaustive semantic description, educational dictionaries must adapt their strategies to the cognitive and linguistic needs of learners. Effective lexicographic representation of idioms and figurative expressions should therefore include functional equivalents, concise cultural explanations, contextualized examples, and usage notes. These elements enable learners not only to understand meaning but also to apply linguocultural units appropriately in real communicative situations. Another significant conclusion concerns the role of contextualization in the semantization of linguocultural units. Idioms and figurative expressions derive their meaning from discourse, pragmatic conditions, and sociocultural context. Dictionaries that isolate these units from authentic usage contexts risk presenting them as static and decontextualized forms. The inclusion of illustrative examples reflecting real-life communication enhances semantic transparency and supports the development of pragmatic awareness among learners. This is particularly important in educational lexicography, where dictionaries function as learning tools rather than mere reference works. From a theoretical standpoint, the research confirms the relevance of cognitive and cultural linguistic frameworks for lexicographic practice.



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Conceptual metaphor theory, cultural schemas, and cognitive models of meaning extension provide valuable insights into the internal structure of idioms and figurative expressions. Applying these frameworks in dictionary compilation allows lexicographers to organize meanings more systematically and to reveal underlying conceptual motivations. Such an approach contributes to a deeper understanding of linguocultural units and strengthens the explanatory power of educational dictionaries. The findings also indicate that corpus-based methodologies remain underutilized in Uzbek–English educational lexicography. Corpus data offer objective evidence regarding frequency, collocation, register, and pragmatic function of idioms and figurative expressions. Integrating corpus-based insights into dictionary entries would significantly improve the reliability and relevance of lexicographic descriptions. This is especially important given the dynamic nature of language and the continuous evolution of figurative usage in both Uzbek and English.

In evaluating existing Uzbek–English educational dictionaries, the study identifies several recurring shortcomings, including inconsistent treatment of idioms, insufficient cultural commentary, and limited differentiation between literal and figurative meanings. These issues underscore the need for standardized principles and guidelines for the lexicographic representation of linguocultural units. Establishing such principles would enhance consistency across dictionaries and improve their pedagogical effectiveness.

In conclusion, the representation of linguocultural units in Uzbek–English educational dictionaries is a complex and multifaceted task that demands an interdisciplinary approach combining lexicography, semantics, cultural linguistics, and language pedagogy. Improving the lexicographic treatment of idioms and figurative expressions contributes not only to linguistic accuracy but also to intercultural understanding and communicative competence. The results of this study provide a theoretical and practical foundation for the development of more effective, learner-oriented bilingual dictionaries and open new perspectives for further research in educational lexicography and linguocultural studies.

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