



LEXICOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL SEMANTICS OF LEXICAL UNITS

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Abstract

This article examines the cultural semantics of lexical units through the lens of lexicographic analysis. The study focuses on how words and expressions reflect the worldview, traditions, and cultural values of a particular linguistic community. Lexicographic methods are used to identify semantic nuances that arise due to cultural differences between languages. Special attention is given to the relationship between language and culture, as well as how cultural connotations are represented in bilingual and explanatory dictionaries. The research highlights the importance of interpreting lexical meaning not only from a linguistic but also from a cultural perspective. The findings contribute to the development of more comprehensive dictionary entries that reflect the cultural depth of lexical units and facilitate intercultural communication.

Keywords: Cultural semantics, lexical units, lexicographic analysis, linguistic culture, bilingual dictionaries, cultural connotation, semantic structure, intercultural communication.

Introduction:

Language is not only a means of communication but also a reflection of the culture, mentality, and worldview of a society. Every lexical unit carries within it a cultural imprint that reveals the traditions, social norms, and values of the speakers who use it. Therefore, the study of the cultural semantics of lexical units has become one of the most significant aspects of modern linguistics, especially



in the field of lexicography. Lexicographic analysis allows researchers to systematize and interpret the cultural meanings embedded in words, providing a bridge between linguistic form and cultural content. The connection between language and culture is inseparable. Through language, people express their identity and understanding of the world, while culture shapes the conceptual and semantic structure of vocabulary. When a word is used in different cultural contexts, its meaning often shifts, acquiring additional semantic shades and connotations. For example, certain symbols, colors, or metaphors may carry different emotional or cultural meanings across languages, which can only be understood through detailed lexicographic and cultural analysis. Modern lexicography aims not only to record linguistic forms but also to capture their sociocultural depth. In bilingual or explanatory dictionaries, it is increasingly important to include cultural information that helps users interpret meanings correctly and avoid misunderstanding. Thus, lexicographic analysis of cultural semantics contributes to improving dictionary descriptions, translation accuracy, and intercultural communication. This study examines the ways in which cultural semantics are represented in dictionaries, focusing on how lexicographic methods reveal the relationship between linguistic meaning and cultural context. The research also explores how cultural factors influence word formation, semantic development, and interpretation. The results of such analysis can assist linguists, translators, and educators in understanding the multidimensional nature of language and in developing lexicographic tools that reflect not only linguistic but also cultural realities.

Methodology and results:

The cultural semantics of lexical units is significantly influenced by both the internal and external relations of peoples. As a result of language contact, words borrowed from one language into another may retain their original cultural semantics or undergo change in a new environment. For example, the Arabic word “kitob” (“book”) borrowed into Uzbek has preserved not only the meaning of a written work but also cultural connotations related to knowledge, education, and intellectual development. Modern globalization processes also affect the cultural semantics of lexical units: with the emergence of technological terms and



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expressions denoting new social phenomena, new layers of cultural meaning are formed. Indeed, recent advances in linguistics demonstrate the importance of studying the interconnection and mutual influence between language and culture as a major research direction. According to V. I. Postovalova, the anthropological paradigm of language study emphasizes understanding language as a form of human existence. From this perspective, culture represents the “habitat” of human beings formed through their moral and spiritual perception of the world, which in turn influences self-awareness. To determine how cultural information is encoded in the semantics of linguistic units, it is crucial to identify these cultural meanings and understand their role within the semantic structure of words. V. N. Telia defines cultural meaning as follows: “Cultural connotation, in a broad sense, is the interpretation of denotative or figuratively motivated, quasi-denotative aspects of meaning within the framework of cultural categories. When considering phraseological units as secondary nomination signs, they are characterized by figurative and situational motivation directly related to the worldview of native speakers; the essence or nucleus of cultural meaning lies in this figurative basis.” Thus, cultural information is embedded within the meaning of linguistic units. From this perspective, connotation should be understood not only as a semantic feature supplementing denotation, but also as a semantic entity arising from the structuring or interpretation of the denotative component within the semantics of a phraseological unit. This concept is of particular importance. However, while cultural meanings in phraseology are primarily connected with figurative imagery, it is also necessary to explore the origins of cultural meanings in individual words. It is evident that both words and phraseological units derive all their meanings — including cultural aspects — from a common source: the conceptual base underlying the semantics of linguistic units. For instance, the English word *mind* poses considerable challenges for Russian-speaking learners of English because it corresponds to several different linguistic concepts in Russian. Furthermore, the notion of *mind* is crucial for understanding what is often called the “national mentality.” It frequently serves as a core concept shaping the worldview of English-speaking communities. In English-Russian dictionaries, *mind* is translated as a noun meaning “intellect” or “thinking being.” However, when it comes to translating idiomatic expressions containing *mind*,



these equivalents apply only in certain contexts. For example: His mind was full of the things he had seen that day (Uning boshi o'sha kuni ko'rganlari haqidagi xotiralarga to'la edi); I need a walk to clear my mind (Fikrlar tiniqligini tiklash uchun sayr qilishim kerak); My mind was on something else (Men o'zimni begona fikrlardan xalos qila olmadim); My grandmother's mind is failing (Buvimning aqliy qobiliyatlari sezilarli darajada yomonlashdi). The term mind can also denote "memory": an absent-minded person – a forgetful or distracted person. In other words, the English concept of mind varies across contexts and may mean intellect, thought, mental capacity, soul, spirit, mood, mentality, and other notions. The specific linguistic characteristics of mind become clear when compared with its Russian equivalent emphasizing intellectual abilities. Although Russian has the concept of aql (intellect) as an inner space (as in "to solve a problem in one's mind"), it is more often associated with the plane of thinking, as in expressions like "no one knows what is in his mind." Thus, each of these concepts (aql and mind) is embedded in its respective society's conceptual framework and carries cultural implications determined by its internal conceptual structure. This internal conceptual structure demonstrates remarkable historical stability. Although the meanings of polysemantic words may change over time, they remain relatively consistent throughout the evolution of the linguistic system. As V. N. Telia emphasizes, "Culture serves as a form of historical memory for a people," and the vocabulary of a language acts as the linguistic carrier of that culture. The internal conceptual structure of word combinations expresses "quanta" of the conceptual picture of the world and, in turn, shapes the mentality of a linguistic community. The principles of categorizing knowledge about reality, as manifested within a speech community, can be revealed through studying the conceptual bases of word meanings. This internal conceptual structure assigns culturally specific semantic forms to the names of objects, phenomena, and processes, thereby enabling each society to interpret reality in its own unique way.

Conclusion:

The conducted analysis demonstrates that the cultural semantics of lexical units reflects not only linguistic but also deeply rooted conceptual and cultural structures of a nation. Every language embodies a unique worldview that has been



shaped by the history, traditions, and mentality of its speakers. Lexical meanings are therefore inseparably linked with the cultural codes of a society. The comparison of lexical and phraseological units across languages, such as mind and its equivalents in other linguistic systems, reveals the differences in conceptualization and cognitive perception that arise from distinct cultural experiences. The research shows that language contact, globalization, and technological progress continuously reshape the cultural semantics of words, adding new layers of meaning while preserving traces of traditional concepts. This dynamic interaction between linguistic form and cultural content ensures that language remains a living reflection of human thought and social evolution. Moreover, lexicographic analysis serves as a valuable tool for uncovering and interpreting cultural meanings embedded in lexical units. Through the study of dictionary definitions, usage examples, and idiomatic expressions, researchers can trace how cultural values and attitudes manifest in linguistic structures. In conclusion, understanding the cultural semantics of lexical units is essential for cross-cultural communication, translation studies, and lexicography. It bridges linguistic theory with anthropology and helps to promote mutual understanding among different linguistic communities. Thus, the lexicographic approach to cultural semantics not only enhances linguistic research but also contributes to preserving and interpreting the cultural heritage encoded in language.

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