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Principles of Lexicographic Interpretation of Sociolinguistic Variability in Uzbek and German Languages

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A B S T R A C T
This article presents a comparative-typological study of the principles of lexicographic interpretation of sociolinguistic variability in the Uzbek and German languages. The research identifies and systematizes the main factors causing linguistic variation and analyzes the ways in which these variations are reflected in explanatory dictionaries. For the first time, it is demonstrated that the approaches to lexicography of sociolinguistic variability differ significantly between Uzbek and German. Uzbek dictionaries tend to prioritize variants corresponding to literary norms, as well as those found in colloquial, artistic, and professional speech. In contrast, German dictionaries extensively document variants reflecting social stratification and dialectal differentiation. The results reveal a quantitative predominance of professional and social variations in Uzbek (34.68% of 8,903 variants) and dialectal variations in German (49.24% of 72,452 variants). These principles provide a more complete representation of the linguistic worldview and contribute to the advancement of digital lexicography, the creation of bilingual resources, and the improvement of language teaching in multilingual environments. The study thus expands the understanding of how sociolinguistic variability is represented in lexicography and opens prospects for developing an Uzbek–German bilingual dictionary that captures the diversity of social and territorial speech forms.

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1. Introduction

Sociolinguistic variability as an object of lexicographic description represents one of the most relevant issues in modern linguistics. In the context of globalization and the intensification of intercultural communication, the need for accurate representation of socially conditioned linguistic variants in lexicographic sources is increasing.

Modern linguistics increasingly recognizes that language does not exist as a homogeneous system but as a complex aggregate of variants conditioned by social, territorial, generational, professional, and other factors. This variability is not a random deviation from the norm but a systemic property of language reflecting its adaptive capacity to the communicative needs of society.

The theoretical foundations for understanding sociolinguistic variability as a regular phenomenon were laid in the works of W. Labov, M. Halliday, and J. Fishman. Their research emphasized that variation is an intrinsic feature of language structure and usage rather than an irregular anomaly, thereby calling for systematic study and lexicographic reflection.

Lexicography, traditionally focused on codifying the literary norm, now faces the challenge of revising its methodological principles in response to new linguistic realities. Contemporary dictionaries are expected

not only to fixate normative usage but also to mirror the full scope of language functioning across diverse social strata. This is especially relevant in the digital era, where dictionary users expect comprehensive information about the sociolinguistic characteristics of lexical units.

The problem of lexicographically describing sociolinguistic variability is complicated by the absence of universal principles and methods. Different lexicographic traditions have evolved distinct strategies for representing linguistic variation, leading to inconsistencies in how socially marked vocabulary is presented. Some dictionaries follow a conservative approach, limiting themselves to a minimal set of stylistic labels, while others strive for inclusivity, encompassing a wide range of substandard and colloquial variants.

A comparative study of the principles for describing sociolinguistic variability in different languages is of special interest, as it helps to reveal both universal regularities and culture-specific traits. The choice of Uzbek and German as objects of analysis is motivated by several factors. Firstly, they belong to different language families—Turkic and Indo-European, respectively—and exhibit contrasting typological structures: agglutinative versus inflectional. Secondly, they represent distinct sociolinguistic environments: Uzbek functions within a relatively homogeneous linguistic community with a strong literary tradition, whereas German displays pronounced dialectal differentiation and polycentricity. Thirdly, the lexicographic traditions of the two languages emerged in different cultural contexts, reflecting divergent views on language norms.

The relevance of this study also stems from practical lexicographic needs. The development of corpus linguistics and computer technologies offers new opportunities for analyzing linguistic variation but simultaneously necessitates a revision of traditional principles of dictionary description. The creation of electronic and multilingual dictionaries requires harmonized approaches to representing sociolinguistic information.

This research, therefore, aims to identify the principles of lexicographic interpretation of sociolinguistic variability in Uzbek and German and to develop an improved system of principles based on comparative analysis. Through the systematic categorization of sociolinguistic variables in both languages and the analysis of existing lexicographic approaches, the study seeks to reveal cultural particularities of representing social stratification in dictionaries and to formulate universal principles applicable across linguistic and lexicographic traditions.

2. Materials and Methods

The methodological foundation of the research is based on the works in sociolinguistics (Labov, 1972; Belikov & Krysin, 2016), lexicography (Denisov, 1993; Mokienko, 2012), and comparative linguistics (Buranov, 1983). The analysis of sociolinguistic variability draws on Labov's concept of "sociolinguistic variables" as "ways of speaking that correlate with linguistic variables so that their numerical values correspond closely to nonlinguistic variables" (Labov, 1972, p. 237). This approach enables the establishment of systematic connections between linguistic variants and the social characteristics of their speakers.

The analysis of lexicographic description principles relies on the classification proposed by B.A. Larin and V.M. Mokienko, who identified the following core principles: completeness, accurate documentation, spatio-temporal characterization of lexical items, retrospective cultural analysis, and comprehensive characterization (Mokienko, 2012, pp. 72–75).

The study employed a set of complementary methods. The **descriptive method** was used to systematize and classify sociolinguistic variables identified in the analyzed dictionaries. As noted by P.N. Denisov, the descriptive method in lexicography involves not only the fixation of linguistic facts but also their interpretation within a sociocultural framework (Denisov, 1993, p. 118). **Component analysis** was used to identify semantic and pragmatic components of socially marked lexical meanings. The **comparative method** served as the foundation of the research, allowing the identification of both universal and ethnospecific features in lexicographic representations of sociolinguistic variability. **Statistical analysis** provided quantitative data on the distribution of sociolinguistic variables across parameters, while **sociolinguistic analysis** was employed to establish relationships between linguistic variants and the social

factors influencing their use.

The primary materials were two authoritative explanatory dictionaries: the *Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language* (5 volumes, edited by A. Madvaliev, 2006–2008) and *Deutsches Universalwörterbuch: Das umfassende Bedeutungswörterbuch der deutschen Gegenwartssprache* (Duden, 2019). Both dictionaries were selected for their comprehensiveness, authority, and relevance in reflecting contemporary linguistic realities, covering a wide range of lexical items of varying stylistic and social marking.

The *Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language* contains about 80,000 entries, encompassing common vocabulary, specialized terminology, archaisms, and dialectisms. Compiled by the Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, it reflects current tendencies in the development of the Uzbek literary language. The *Deutsches Universalwörterbuch*, by contrast, is the most extensive explanatory dictionary of modern German, comprising about 500,000 lexical units based on the Duden corpus, which has been continuously updated since 2001 and currently includes around three billion word occurrences from diverse text types. The preface explicitly notes that "special attention is given to representing linguistic diversity in all its manifestations, including regional, social, and functional varieties" (Dudenredaktion, 2019, p. 6).

The analysis identified and systematized 8,903 sociolinguistic variants in Uzbek and 72,452 variants in German. The significant quantitative disparity reflects fundamental differences in the two lexicographic traditions' treatment of linguistic variability and warrants closer examination. The interdisciplinary character of the research object necessitated an integrated approach combining methods of sociolinguistics, lexicology, and lexicography.

3. Results

The analysis of the *Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language* edited by A. Madvaliev revealed 8,903 lexical units bearing sociolinguistic markers. The classification of these variants shows that the majority correspond to professional and social distinctions (34.68%), followed by colloquial and literary stylistic variations. These reflect the Uzbek lexicographic tradition's emphasis on the literary norm while incorporating selected substandard or specialized variants to illustrate stylistic richness.

In contrast, the *Deutsches Universalwörterbuch* documents 72,452 sociolinguistic variants, 49.24% of which correspond to dialectal differences, illustrating Germany's polycentric linguistic landscape. This inclusivity reflects the Duden editorial philosophy that aims to register "living language in all its forms," thereby presenting a more dynamic and socially stratified picture of linguistic reality.

The comparative analysis reveals fundamental divergences in how sociolinguistic variability is represented lexicographically. Uzbek lexicography remains partially normative, primarily focusing on the codification of the literary standard, while German lexicography demonstrates a descriptivist orientation, extensively documenting social and regional diversity.

Table 1. Distribution of Sociolinguistic Variables in the Uzbek Language

Type of Variable	Quantity	Percentage
Professional marking	3,087	34.68%
Functional-stylistic marking	2,355	26.45%
Chronological linkage	1,684	18.92%
Territorial limitation	1,172	13.16%
National-cultural significance	281	3.16%
Emotional-stylistic marking	246	2.76%
Gender-age limitation	44	0.49%
Frequency of use	34	0.38%

The largest group comprises lexemes with **professional marking (34.68%)**, reflecting the Uzbek lexicographic tradition's focus on systematizing terminology across different domains of human activity. The analysis shows that the dictionary includes terms from **45 distinct fields of knowledge**, including medicine (358 entries), technology (198), linguistics (299), biology (87), and several other specialized

areas.

Functional-stylistic marking ranks second (26.45%) and includes the following major categories: colloquial style (s.t. – 823 entries), bookish style (kt. – 1045), poetic style (poet. – 148), and folklore style (folk. – 154). Notably, bookish vocabulary quantitatively surpasses colloquial vocabulary, indicating the dictionary's normative orientation.

Chronological marking (18.92%) is mainly represented by archaisms (esk. – 1539 entries) and historicisms (tar. – 145 entries). The high proportion of archaisms reflects the lexicographers' aim to preserve the historical continuity of the Uzbek language and document its diachronic evolution.

Territorial limitation (13.16%) includes dialectisms marked with *shv.* (1172 entries). The relatively small share of dialectal vocabulary can be explained by the normative direction of the dictionary and its effort to unify the literary standard of the language.

In contrast, the *Deutsches Universalwörterbuch* includes **72,452 lexemes** with sociolinguistic marking — **8.1 times more** than in the Uzbek dictionary (see Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of Sociolinguistic Variables in the German Language

Type of Variable	Quantity	Percentage
Territorial limitation	35,672	49.24%
Professional marking	19,134	26.41%
Functional-stylistic marking	7,218	9.96%
Emotional-stylistic marking	6,374	8.80%
Frequency of use	1,807	2.50%
Chronological linkage	1,453	2.00%
Gender-age limitation	698	0.96%
National-cultural significance	96	0.13%

In the German language, **territorial limitation dominates (49.24%)**, reflecting the high degree of dialectal differentiation. The dictionary registers variants from **29 dialectal areas**, including Bavarian (bayr.), Berlin (berlin.), Northern (nordd.), Southern (südd.), Austrian (österr.), Swiss (schweiz.), and other regional varieties.

Professional marking accounts for 26.41%, encompassing terminology from 167 fields of knowledge. The most frequent domains include medical, technical, legal, and scientific terminologies across multiple disciplines.

Emotional-stylistic marking (8.8%) far exceeds the corresponding figure in Uzbek and covers a spectrum ranging from ironic (iron.) and humorous (scherzh.) to coarse (derb) and vulgar (vulg.) registers. This fine-grained classification reflects German lexicography's aspiration to record the pragmatic and expressive nuances of lexical meaning with precision.

Lexicographic Principles in the Uzbek Explanatory Dictionary

The structural analysis of entries in the *Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language* revealed the following principles of lexicographic interpretation of sociolinguistic variability:

1. **Principle of Normative Orientation.**

Primary emphasis is placed on variants that conform to the literary norm. Sub-standard variants are included selectively and are clearly marked with restrictive labels.

Example:

OG'ZAKI – 1) Performed or expressed orally, not in written form. 2) s.t. salb. Uttered for mere formality; empty talk.

2. **Principle of Functional Differentiation.**

Functional styles are clearly distinguished through specialized labels: *kt.* (bookish), *s.t.* (colloquial), *poet.* (poetic), *folk.* (folkloric), *ad.* (literary).

3. **Principle of Professional Specialization.**

Terminological vocabulary is widely represented with detailed domain labels: *tib.* (medical), *tex.* (technical), *mat.* (mathematical), *tlsh.* (linguistic), etc.

4. **Principle of Etymological Informativeness.**

The dictionary systematically provides etymological data on lexical origins — Arabic, Persian, Russian, and other sources — reflecting the multilayered structure of the Uzbek lexicon.

Lexicographic Principles in the German Dictionary

The analysis of the *Deutsches Universalwörterbuch* revealed a different but complementary set of principles:

1. **Principle of Maximum Inclusivity.**

The dictionary aims to record the broadest possible spectrum of linguistic variants, including sub-standard forms, dialectisms, professional jargons, and youth slang.

2. **Principle of Territorial Differentiation.**

A detailed system of regional labels reflects Germany's dialectal diversity, e.g. *landsch.* (regional), *nordd.* (northern German), *südd.* (southern German), *österr.* (Austrian).

3. **Principle of Pragmatic Marking.**

Pragmatic characteristics of lexical units are specified with fine gradations of emotional and stylistic registers: *geh.* (elevated), *ugs.* (colloquial), *salopp.* (informal), *derb.* (coarse).

4. **Principle of Sociolectal Differentiation.**

Distinct social and age-related groups of speakers are marked explicitly: *Jugendsprache* (youth language), *Studentensprache* (student slang), *Kindersprache* (child language).

Comparative Findings

The comparison of both systems reveals **universal** and **idio-ethnic** features in the lexicographic interpretation of sociolinguistic variability.

Universal principles include:

- ✓ *Systematic marking* (both dictionaries employ extensive labeling systems);
- ✓ *Functional differentiation* (distinguishing registers and styles);
- ✓ *Illustrativeness* (providing contextual examples);
- ✓ *Etymological informativeness* (stating lexical origin).

Idio-ethnic features:

- ➢ *Uzbek lexicography:* priority of normative variants; extensive professional differentiation; strong focus on chronological marking; limited coverage of territorial variation.
- ➢ *German lexicography:* maximum inclusivity of sub-standard forms; dominance of territorial differentiation; detailed pragmatic marking; systematic reflection of sociolectal variation.

Quantitative differences — 8,903 versus 72,452 variants — reflect not only objective differences in linguistic variability but also divergent lexicographic traditions and conceptions of linguistic normativity.

4. Discussion

The differences identified in the lexicographic interpretation of sociolinguistic variability in Uzbek and German arise from a complex interplay of **sociolinguistic, cultural-historical, and methodological factors**.

German is characterized by a high degree of internal differentiation, historically rooted in the fragmentation of the German-speaking area and the polycentric nature of the literary standard. As A. I. Domashnev notes, "the German literary language exists in four national variants — German, Austrian, Swiss, and Liechtenstein — each with distinctive features on all linguistic levels" (Domashnev, 1995, p. 23). This explains the dominance of territorial differentiation in the German dictionary (49.24% of all variants).

In contrast, Uzbek exhibits greater linguistic unification, stemming from deliberate language policies aimed at forming a unified literary standard. N. Mahmudov and A. Nurmonov observe that the modern Uzbek literary language demonstrates relative stability of norms and limited variability in official and educational contexts (Mahmudov & Nurmonov, 1995, p. 156). Consequently, professional and functional-stylistic differentiation takes precedence over territorial variation.

Differences in lexicographic traditions mirror distinct **cultural conceptions of linguistic norms**. The German tradition, tracing back to the Brothers Grimm, is characterized by inclusivity and descriptive openness toward non-standard forms. As V. P. Berkov remarks, German lexicography has long adhered to a descriptive orientation, seeking to reflect real usage in all its diversity (Berkov, 2004, p. 89).

The Uzbek lexicographic tradition, by contrast, emerged alongside the development of a national literary language and retains a **normative orientation**. This manifests in selective inclusion of variants and a strong codificatory impulse. Uzbek lexicography thus plays a key role in the standardization and stabilization of the literary norm (Mirtojiev, 2010, p. 178).

The striking quantitative disparity (72,452 vs. 8,903 variants) stems not only from linguistic reality but also from differing **methodological approaches**. The German dictionary is corpus-based (three billion word tokens) and relies on quantitative frequency and distributional criteria. The Uzbek dictionary, in turn, was compiled largely through expert qualitative analysis, producing a more conservative approach to disputed forms.

The distribution of sociolinguistic variables reveals culturally specific **patterns of social stratification** in language use. The high percentage of professionally marked lexemes in Uzbek (34.68% vs. 26.41% in German) mirrors Uzbekistan's post-Soviet socioeconomic modernization, accompanied by rapid terminological innovation and borrowing. As N. Avazbaev notes, the modern Uzbek language has undergone intensive development of terminological systems in education, healthcare, information technology, and other sectors (Avazbaev, 1995, p. 203).

The comparatively lower proportion of professional vocabulary in German lexicography reflects its longer history of terminological standardization and the availability of specialized dictionaries, reducing the need for extensive terminological labeling in general-purpose reference works.

The radical difference in **territorial variation** (13.16% in Uzbek vs. 49.24% in German) warrants special attention. In German, the high proportion of territorially marked entries reflects enduring dialectal differentiation despite standardization. H. Eroms notes that territorial variation remains a salient feature of German, evident not only in traditional dialects but also in *regiolects* and urban *koiné* (Eroms, 2008, p. 156).

By contrast, the relatively low share of dialectally marked vocabulary in Uzbek may reflect both a lesser degree of dialectal diversity and deliberate unification policies. The modern Uzbek literary language is based primarily on the Ferghana dialect, with elements from others, contributing to overall uniformity (Jamolkhonov, 2005, p. 89).

The much higher proportion of **emotionally and stylistically marked vocabulary** in German (8.8% vs. 2.76% in Uzbek) reflects differences in cultural norms of emotional expression and evaluation. German communicative culture tolerates more direct expression of negative emotions and critical attitudes, resulting in a rich range of expressively marked vocabulary.

Uzbek communicative culture, by contrast, emphasizes politeness and the avoidance of overtly negative evaluations, producing a narrower spectrum of emotionally marked entries. This aligns with Sh. Usmanova's observation that Uzbek communicative culture is characterized by a high degree of speech

etiquette formalization and avoidance of confrontational expressions (Usmanova, 2019, p. 134).

Overall, the findings have significant theoretical implications for understanding the **nature of sociolinguistic variability and its lexicographic representation**. The study confirms the **universal typology of sociolinguistic variables** (territorial, social, stylistic, professional) while revealing striking differences in their proportional distribution and modes of representation. These results corroborate W. Labov's concept of the **universality of sociolinguistic variation** coupled with its culturally specific manifestations (Labov, 1972, p. 325).

The comparative analysis highlights the **active role of lexicography in language standardization and normalization processes**. Dictionaries do not merely reflect existing linguistic variability; they also shape societal perceptions of what constitutes acceptable and preferred usage. This aligns with L.P. Krysin's concept of lexicography as an "instrument of language planning" (Krysin, 2008, p. 115).

Regarding the **cultural conditioning of lexicographic principles**, the findings demonstrate that such principles are not culturally neutral but reflect specific conceptions of language norms, permissible variability, and the social functions of dictionaries. This supports the **sociocultural approach to lexicography** advanced in the works of V.G. Gak and others (Gak, 2010, p. 267).

At the same time, this study has several **methodological limitations** that should be considered when interpreting its results and planning future research. The analysis is limited to two explanatory dictionaries, which restricts the generalizability of conclusions about entire lexicographic traditions. Future studies should include a broader corpus of lexicographic sources — such as specialized sociolectal dictionaries, dialect dictionaries, and electronic resources — to provide a more comprehensive basis for comparison.

Moreover, the current research offers a **synchronic snapshot** of lexicographic practice. A **diachronic investigation** tracing the evolution of principles of lexicographic interpretation of sociolinguistic variability would provide deeper insights into long-term tendencies. Additionally, this study does not address how actual users perceive and employ sociolinguistic information in dictionaries. Future research should therefore incorporate **empirical studies of user behavior**, preferences, and informational needs to bridge theoretical findings and practical usability.

The findings also carry significant **practical implications** for lexicographic theory and applied dictionary-making. The identified principles can be used to improve existing explanatory dictionaries by unifying labeling systems, expanding coverage of sociolinguistic variants, and enhancing their description. The proposed system of principles may serve as a **methodological foundation for new types of dictionaries** designed to capture sociolinguistic variability — including corpus-based electronic and multimedia lexicographic resources.

5. Conclusion

The comparative study of the principles of lexicographic interpretation of sociolinguistic variability in the Uzbek and German languages reveals both **universal patterns** and **culture-specific features** in how linguistic diversity is represented in explanatory dictionaries.

The main results demonstrate that lexicographic principles are not culturally neutral but embody specific perceptions of linguistic normativity and acceptable variation. The **Uzbek lexicographic tradition** is characterized by **normative orientation** and **selective inclusion** of variants, whereas the **German tradition** is marked by **maximal inclusivity** and a **descriptive approach**.

Quantitative analysis revealed major differences in the distribution of sociolinguistic variables: **professional and functional-stylistic differentiation dominates in Uzbek**, while **territorial and social differentiation prevails in German**. These discrepancies reflect both the objective sociolinguistic characteristics of the respective speech communities and the divergent **methodological paradigms** guiding their lexicographic practice.

The **enhanced system of lexicographic interpretation principles** developed in this study — encompassing *maximum inclusivity, social and regional stratification, authentic documentation, semantic equality*, *contextual specification,* and *user orientation* — provides a methodological framework for the

next generation of lexicographic resources. Such an approach allows for a more accurate reflection of language as a socially embedded phenomenon.

The **prospects for future research** include expanding the empirical base through the inclusion of additional languages and lexicographic traditions, conducting diachronic analyses of the evolution of lexicographic principles, and developing technological solutions for creating **corpus-driven and personalized lexicographic tools** in the digital age.

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