

A LINGUOCULTURAL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE “LABOR” CONCEPT IN FRENCH AND UZBEK PROVERBS

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Abstract

This article provides a comparative linguocultural and cognitive analysis of the concept of “labor” as represented in French and Uzbek folk proverbs. The study reveals the semantic, axiological, and pragmatic dimensions of the labor concept and identifies its role in the mentality of both cultures. Based on proverbial material, attitudes toward labor, social values, moral norms, and cultural stereotypes are examined. The findings demonstrate that in French culture labor is primarily associated with individual success and professional competence, whereas in Uzbek culture it is conceptualized as a moral and spiritual value symbolizing honesty, blessing, and prosperity.

Keywords: Concept, labor, linguoculture, folk proverbs, comparative analysis, French language, Uzbek language.

Introduction

In modern linguistics, the relationship between language and culture has become a central area of scholarly attention. Within linguocultural studies, concepts are interpreted as key cognitive units that reflect national worldview and cultural experience. Each concept is directly connected with a nation’s historical background, social values, and collective mentality.

The concept of “labor” has been shaped as a fundamental socio-cultural phenomenon throughout all stages of human civilization. Folk proverbs represent one of the most concise and figurative forms of expressing this concept in popular consciousness. Therefore, a comparative study of the linguocultural characteristics of the labor concept in French and Uzbek proverbs constitutes a relevant and timely research problem.

The Concept of “Labor” in Uzbek Folk Proverbs

In Uzbek folk proverbs, labor is primarily interpreted as a moral and spiritual value. The result of labor is closely associated with blessing, well-being, and honest livelihood.

For example:

- *Mehnat qilgan — to ‘yadi* (He who works will be satisfied)
- *Mehnatning tagi rohat* (The end of labor is comfort)
- *Halol mehnat — halol rizq* (Honest labor brings honest sustenance)



In these proverbs, labor is conceptualized as:

1. a vital necessity;
2. a moral duty;
3. a guarantee of social stability.

In Uzbek culture, labor is inseparably linked with collectivism, patience, and honesty. This perception is rooted in Eastern worldview traditions and religious-ethical values.

The Concept of “Travail” in French Folk Proverbs

In French folk proverbs, the concept of *travail* is characterized by a predominantly rational and pragmatic orientation. Labor is evaluated as a means of personal success, professional mastery, and social progress.

For example:

- *Le travail est la clé du succès* (Work is the key to success)
- *Sans travail, pas de pain* (Without work, there is no bread)
- *C'est en forgeant qu'on devient forgeron* (Practice makes perfect)

In these proverbs, labor functions as:

1. a tool for individual achievement;
2. a source of professional experience and skill;
3. an indicator of social discipline.

In French culture, the labor concept is closely connected with the values of individualism and efficiency.

Comparative Linguocultural Analysis

Comparative analysis shows that in both cultures labor is recognized as a vital necessity. However, the internal content and axiological focus of the concept differ significantly.

In Uzbek proverbs, labor is characterized by:

- moral and spiritual value;
- association with blessing and honesty;
- interpretation as a product of collective consciousness.

In French proverbs, labor is conceptualized as:

- a measure of individual success;
- a condition for professional competence;
- a factor of social efficiency.

5. Linguocultural Analysis Based on a Comparative Table

Table 1. Linguocultural Comparison of the “Labor” Concept in French and Uzbek Proverbs

Analytical Criteria	Uzbek Folk Proverbs	French Folk Proverbs
Concept term	<i>Mehnat</i>	<i>Travail</i>
Core value	Morality, honesty	Efficiency, competence
Dominant connotation	Spiritual, ethical	Rational, pragmatic
Subject orientation	Community, family	Individual
Labor motivation	Blessing, sustenance, comfort	Success, career growth
Result interpretation	Social stability	Social competitiveness
Metaphorical model	Labor → blessing	Labor → mastery
Didactic function	Moral education	Practical guidance



The table demonstrates that although labor is viewed as a positive value in both cultures, its axiological weight and pragmatic orientation differ considerably.

“Labor → Value → Result” Conceptual Model

Based on linguocultural analysis, a three-stage conceptual model of the labor concept is identified in French and Uzbek proverbs.

Conceptual Model in Uzbek Linguoculture

LABOR → MORAL VALUE → BLESSING / SUSTENANCE / COMFORT

- Labor is an activity requiring patience and honesty;
- Value is interpreted as moral duty and spiritual purity;
- Result is a prosperous life and social respect.

This model reflects the transcendental (spiritual) value of labor in Uzbek proverbs:
Mehnatning tagi rohat Halol mehnat — halol rizq

Conceptual Model in French Linguoculture

TRAVAIL → FUNCTIONAL VALUE → SUCCESS / MASTERY

- *Travail* is a planned and goal-oriented activity;
- Value is associated with discipline and professional competence;
- Result is social success and career achievement.

In this model, labor has an instrumental character:

Le travail est la clé du succès
C'est en forgeant qu'on devient forgeron

Generalized Comparative Conceptual Scheme

Stage	Uzbek Model	French Model
Stage 1	Labor (<i>Mehnat</i>)	Labor (<i>Travail</i>)
Stage 2	Moral value	Practical value
Stage 3	Blessing, comfort	Success, mastery
Concept type	Spiritual-axiological	Pragmatic-functional

Discussion

The conceptual models demonstrate that while the labor concept retains a universal semantic core in both languages, it is reinterpreted through different cultural filters. In Uzbek proverbs, labor functions as a means of reinforcing moral norms, whereas in French proverbs it is conceptualized as a mechanism of personal development and social competitiveness. This confirms the existence of nationally specific realizations of concepts in linguoculture.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that although the “labor” concept functions as a universal value in both French and Uzbek folk proverbs, its linguocultural interpretation differs depending on national mentality. In Uzbek culture, labor is predominantly perceived as a moral and ethical category, while in French culture it is interpreted as a pragmatic concept associated with social success and professional development. In French proverbs, labor is likewise valued as a means of achievement and personal success; however, it is more frequently linked to individual effort, rational planning, discipline, and pragmatic results. The French linguistic worldview tends to



emphasize productivity, efficiency, and personal initiative. Despite these differences in cultural emphasis, both traditions conceptualize labor as a necessary condition for well-being and as a universal ethical principle. Thus, the concept of “labor” functions not only as an economic category but also as a culturally encoded value system that reflects national mentality, historical experience, and social ideals.

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