

The Reflection of The Concept “Labour” In the Naïve Picture of The English World

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Abstract: This study explores the conceptualization of “labour” in the naïve picture of English speakers. It analyzes metaphors, associations, and cultural connotations linked to labour in everyday language. By examining lexical units and figurative expressions, the research reveals how labour is perceived, valued, and emotionally framed in English, reflecting broader socio-cultural attitudes within the naïve linguistic picture of the world.

Keywords: Labour, naïve picture, conceptual metaphor, English language, linguistic picture of the world, cultural connotations, cognitive linguistics, everyday language.

Introduction: The category of “Labour” - representing the universal human model in the collective consciousness - plays a crucial role in the process of conceptualization and categorization within the framework of a simplified worldview (folk perspective, everyday thinking). The use of proverbs, idioms, frame analysis, and metaphors is essential in this context, as these tools are fundamental in creating, expressing, and understanding the human image in the collective mindset. Idioms: green labor, labor at, labor away, labor of Hercules, labor of love ; labor the point, labor under the delusion of, labor under the illusion of, stoop labor, induced labour; manual labour; labour intensive; toil and toil; Put one’s nose to the grindstone ; Back-breaking work; Make heavy weather of (something); Put one’s shoulder to the wheel; Hard graft; the daily grind; work one’s fingers to the bone; Back/nose to the grindstone; blood, sweat, and tears; Burning a candle at both ends; get cracking; give it 110%; go extra mile; move mountains; No pain no gain; active consciousness of the people [1]. The following English proverbs reflect the anthropophenomenon “Labour” in a simple picture of the world: All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy; Many hands make light work; A bad workman always blames his tools; he devil finds work for idle hands to do; Idle folks have the least leisure; Elbow grease; A rolling stone gathers no moss.

During our research, we attempted to create a frame analysis based on concepts related to the anthropophenomenal category of “Labour.” The main objectives of conducting a frame analysis of the “labour” concept were: to identify the governing and organizing elements of the “labour” concept; to reveal the interrelationships between various meanings and uses of the concept; to demonstrate the social, economic, cultural, and linguistic aspects associated with “labour”; and to create a lexical and semantic map of the English word “labour.” In cognitive linguistics, it is understood that a concept's frame analysis, or conceptual frame, is a cognitive structure that organizes knowledge and ideas about a concept through related elements: roles, characteristics, actions, situations, and relationships. In other words, it is a “supporting framework” that illustrates how the concept is formed in our consciousness and what meanings and contexts are connected to it.

In frame analysis, each role or element is a frame component that contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the concept. For example, in the “Labour” frame, the main components (frame elements) consist of the following: Labourer, employer, task/work, tools, effort, time, payment. Furthermore, through frame analysis, the concept of “labour” is also connected with other frames: labour

market - the system of workforce and job positions; labour laws - legal norms regulating labour; labour union - organizations that protect workers' rights. In frame analysis, it is also appropriate to explain subframes, and it is advisable to include the following: Manual labour, mental labour, child labour, labour market, labour union, labour laws.

The role of metaphor in conceptual frame analysis is fundamental. It helps determine how people perceive complex, abstract phenomena (such as labor and love) through comprehensible and clear images. Primarily, it

introduces a new perspective in forming the frame; expresses a value-based attitude: labor can be noble (service) or negative (suffering); assigns roles: who is the hero (worker), who is the enemy (system, boss), who is the ally (colleagues, trade unions); defines causes and goals: for example, the concept of "work as a journey" encompasses goals, paths, obstacles, and achievements.

Below, we will outline the functions of conceptual metaphors in the frame analysis of the "Labour" concept:

Table 1

Functions of metaphors reflecting the anthropophenomenon "Labour" in frame analysis

| Functions of metaphor | Explanations | Examples of metaphors related to the concept of "labor" |
|--|--|---|
| Systematizes the concept | Metaphor gives form to the concept, regulates meanings | "Labour is war" (i.e., there is an enemy, struggle, victory) |
| Paves the way for abstraction | Provides understanding the complex through the simple | "Labour is burden" (that is, labor is depicted as a burden, a burden) |
| Creates role-status frames | Defines participants and their roles | "Labour is service" (worker = employee) |
| Expresses attitude and evaluation | Shows emotional and social perception | "Back-breaking work" (i.e., "work that bends the back" here is a negative assessment of work) |
| The variability of the frame | The variability of the frame allows us to see that the same concept is framed differently in different cultures. | For example, in English "labour as market," in Russian "Trud-podvig" (Труд-подвиг) |

So, metaphor is a means of conceptualization, without which the frame structure of the concept would not be complete. It aids in bringing abstract concepts into clear view, systematizing knowledge, and revealing the value orientations of society. Within the framework of conceptual frame analysis, metaphor is not considered a stylistic device, but rather a cognitive mechanism of thought. At this point, let's analyze the phenomenal

metaphors related to the anthropophenomenon of "labour" among English speakers. In English culture, one of the most frequently used metaphorical phenomena conveying the meaning of great work and constant effort is "Sweat equity" [2]. This metaphor-phenomenon of "labor investment" implies that sweat is a physical sign indicating the true physiological contribution and bodily involvement in work. It is popular among English businessmen and

entrepreneurs, used as “Labour - sweat equity,” and is understood as a means of transforming labor and effort into real value through one's work. The metaphor-phenomenon “Sweat of the brow” [3] carries the meaning of “Someone's hard work and effort in their job” and is a profound concept based on physical and mental experience, embedded in the world's moral and cultural landscape. It embodies religious ideas, physical reality, and the social values of labor, creating a powerful mental image that portrays effort as physical courage. In the metaphor “Labour is resource,” [4] the characteristics of the concept of resource (water, fuel, energy) are transferred to the concept of labor. At the cognitive level, this implies:

- Labor is considered as a substance with quantitative properties (volume, expenditure, efficiency).
- It can be managed: it can be distributed, saved, terminated, and replenished.
- It separates from the subject and becomes an object of use - an alienated force.

Consequently, this metaphor-phenomenon transforms human labor into an inanimate entity capable of economic and technical analysis. This is a fundamental change in perception: labor is not a process of self-expression, but a manageable asset, determining the way of thinking, linguistic expression, cultural values, and social practices regarding labor and humans in general. Its power lies in its imperceptibility: it has become so natural that it is perceived not as a metaphor, but as “common sense.” However, it is here that its ideological power and danger are hidden. Understanding the metaphorical nature of this structure is the first step towards reinterpreting the relationship between humans, labor, and culture.

“Labor is a substance” represents a metaphor-phenomenon based on the physical-sensory experience of perceiving the world, where the abstract concept of “labor” is understood as a physically perceived substance. Within the framework of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff, Johnson, Апресян, and others), such metaphors are considered the result of projecting human sensorimotor experience onto abstract categories. In this case, labor is perceived not as a process or action, but as a material substance that can be measured, accumulated, spent, or invested. This conceptualization is manifested in linguistic constructions such as “He spent all his labor on the task,” “Labor fuels the economy,” “The product incorporates human labor.” In all these expressions, labor is embodied in the form of liquid, fuel, mass, energy, i.e., concrete substances perceived by the senses. Such a transfer of concepts from the physical realm to the abstract allows ordinary consciousness to

construct knowledge about labor as a resource with volume, weight, density, and degree of incorporation. Therefore, in the English-speaking mentality, labor is often perceived as a measurable value, asset, or capital, which is especially characteristic of the economic and cultural discourse of Western civilization. The metaphor “labor is a substance” forms a cognitive model in which labor can be “poured,” “injected,” “extracted,” or “absorbed,” which strengthens its status as an object in linguistic consciousness. This allows people to think and speak more clearly and vividly about labor, despite its abstract nature. The metaphor becomes a means of understanding labor activity as a physically significant phenomenon, having not only economic but also cultural and cognitive value.

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