

Conceptualization Of The Concept “Labour” In The Scientific And Professional Pictures Of The World

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Abstract: The concept of «labour» in the English linguistic picture of the world embodies a multifaceted notion deeply embedded in cultural, social, and economic contexts. This study explores how the English language conceptualizes «labour» beyond its mere denotation of physical or mental work, reflecting broader ideologies and attitudes towards work, productivity, and human effort. Through an analysis of semantic fields, metaphorical expressions the research reveals how “labour” is framed as both a necessary human activity and a social value that intersects with identity, class, and economic structures. The English linguistic system encodes labour not only as an action but also as a social institution, encompassing concepts such as labour rights, exploitation, and labour markets. The conceptualization is dynamic, influenced by historical developments like industrialization and contemporary shifts such as the gig economy. By examining lexical choices and pragmatic usages, the study highlights how the English language constructs a worldview where labour is central to individual purpose and societal progress. This conceptual framework affects perceptions of labour’s dignity, burden, and reward, shaping communicative practices and social policies. Ultimately, understanding the linguistic conceptualization of labour in English offers insights into how language reflects and shapes human experience and social reality.

Keywords: Labour, conceptualization, Linguistic picture of the world, semantic fields, Metaphor.

Introduction: In the past decade, researchers have shown increasing interest in studying concepts and categories. These fundamental concepts play a crucial role in understanding and perceiving the national linguistic landscape. Among such important concepts is the anthropophenomenon of “labour,” which possesses linguocultural characteristics and relates to human activity. The anthropophenomenon of labor is viewed as the vital essence of both individuals and society. Labor is considered a means of ensuring the existence of people and all of humanity, as well as a method for developing civilization.

In modeling the linguocognitive anthropophenomenon of “Labour” within the scientific worldview, it is necessary to analyze the lexical definitions of labor in English scientific specialized and encyclopedic dictionaries. As O.A. Kornilov [1, 11] emphasized, the scientific picture of the world is verbalized and recorded in the terminology of specialized sciences and encompasses knowledge from all branches of science

about the world. Lexical definitions are “constructed for specialists in a specific field of scientific knowledge and reveal significant aspects of the concept.” [2, 62]. The scientific picture of the world appears in philosophical, sociological, historical, cultural, sociological, and other similar forms. These manifestations are based on the «principle of acknowledging within their scope the existence of significant differences in the structural-semantic organization and functional-pragmatic orientation of linguocognitive categories” [3, 467]. The category of “labour” in English, as in many other languages, is considered one of the fundamental concepts. The linguistic picture of the concept “labour” carries a complex semantic meaning. It is directly linked to human life activity and is interpreted as both a cognitive phenomenon and a cultural phenomenon. The anthropophenomenon of “labour” is an important linguocultural concept, its relevance further confirmed by its semantic density. Studying this concept helps to reconstruct society's worldview, reveal the value

orientations of culture, and shape their hierarchy. Numerous works by scholars such as L.L.Bankova, I.Yu.Vostrikova, and S.V.Koltakova are dedicated to the study of the concept of labour. Structurally, the concept of labour possesses a field-like character. The informational (semantic) component of the concept largely depends on its lexical expressions within phrasal structures.

METHODOLOGY

Structurally, the concept of labor possesses a field-like nature. The informational (semantic) aspect of the concept largely depends on its lexical expressions within phrases. In English, the main expressions of the concept (direct naming) are represented by numerous words: job, work, labour, as well as the lexemes toil, deed, business, career and members of these word families (A job of work; Carve out a career for oneself "to build a career"; a labour of love "selfless or uncompensated work").

In the traditional worldview of English speakers, two distinct notions of labor are clearly differentiated - labor as activity and labor as service. The first primarily encompasses physical labor within the traditional subsistence economy, especially crafts and maritime work. A conceptually important feature is that this work is physical and demands great effort and diligence.

In the second case (labor as a service), labor activity is perceived as a social phenomenon and is associated with various positions in the service hierarchy and different wage systems. It is within the framework of the labor concept that the idea of the possibility to engage or not engage in paid labor activity, based on the social relations between the employer and the employee, is reflected.

According to V.A.Maslova, the structure of the "labor" anthropophenomenon includes: the core (cognitive-propositional structure of the key concept), the near-core area (other lexical expressions of the key concept, its synonyms, etc.), and the periphery (associative-figurative expressions) [4, 29]. Within the framework of this dissertation, in the process of studying the linguocognitive anthropophenomenon «labor» in the English scientific worldview, the meanings of the lexeme «labor» were analyzed in 11 English scientific dictionaries. These dictionaries comprise sociological, philosophical, psychological, and historical dictionaries.

In lexical definitions, the following meanings of the category «Labour» and their associated concepts are distinguished based on their denotative differences:

In explanatory dictionaries: a) expenditure of physical or mental effort, especially when difficult or

compulsory; b) services performed by workers for wages, as distinguished from those rendered by entrepreneurs for profits; c) human activity that provides goods or services in an economy; d) physical activities (such as dilation of the cervix and contraction of the uterus) involved in giving birth; e) workers considered as a group; f) practical work, especially work involving physical effort [5].

Sociological dictionaries: work; force; paid employment; any work or effort directed toward the attainment of a specific goal; practical work, especially when it involves hard physical effort; very hard work, usually physical work; turnover; labor union; division of labor; manual workers; labor dispute; labor relations; all the people who work for a company or in a country; Philosophical dictionaries: in relation to nature; man purposefully acts on the objects of nature and changes them. His attitude to nature is one aspect of L. By changing external nature, man also changes his own nature. The adaptation of objects to man's requirements (q.v.) implies, above all, the change of external nature. L. consists of the following elements: (1) man's purposeful activity, or L. proper; (2) the object of L.; (3) means of L. L. aimed at the transformation of nature comes to fruition when all its elements are created by L. and are not given in a ready-made form [6, 215].

Historical dictionaries: Exertion of muscular strength, or bodily exertion which causes weariness; particularly, the exertion of the limbs in occupations by which subsistence is obtained, as in agriculture and manufactures, in distinction from exertions of strength in play or amusements, which are termed exercise, rather than labor. Toilsome work; pains; travail; any bodily exertion which is attended with fatigue. After the labors of the day, the farmer retires, and rest is sweet. Moderate labor contributes to health. 1) Work; esp. hard work; also services; to work; (2) physical exertion, manual work, toil; work or exercise tending to strain the back; (3) agricultural labor, horticultural work; (4) mental work; (5) the fruits of labor, product; a book [7].

Medical dictionaries: the last stage of pregnancy when the muscles of the uterus start to push the baby out of the body, usually lasting until the baby appears; stages of labor [8].

Economic dictionaries: the efforts exerted to produce any goods or services; the labor and skill of one man is frequently used in a partnership, and valued as equal to the capital of another; when business has been done for another, and suit is brought to recover a just reward, there is generally contained in the declaration, a count for work and labor; where penitentiaries exist,

persons who have committed crimes are condemned to be imprisoned therein at labor [9].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis revealed that the conceptualization of «labour» differs significantly across scientific and professional discourses. In scientific contexts, particularly within economics, sociology, and cognitive linguistics, «labour» is often viewed as an abstract, systematized category. It is conceptualized through terms like «labour force», «human capital» and «labour productivity,» reflecting a focus on macroeconomic structures and theoretical frameworks. Definitions emphasize labour as a measurable input in production, tied closely to efficiency and social organization. In contrast, the professional picture of the world—shaped by practical, field-specific language—frames «labour» through experiential and task-oriented lenses. For instance, in medicine, «labour» may refer to the process of childbirth, while in construction or engineering, it is associated with manual or skilled physical activity. Terminology reflects direct engagement with tasks, often including collocations such as «labour-intensive» «manual labour,» or «skilled labour.» These findings suggest that while scientific discourse abstracts and generalizes the concept of labour, professional discourse contextualizes it, embedding meaning within specific roles and practices. The conceptual boundaries shift depending on the communicative needs and epistemological goals of each domain. This divergence highlights the importance of context in shaping how fundamental human activities like labour are understood and communicated.

CONCLUSION

The conceptualization of «labour» within scientific and professional pictures of the world reveals the complexity and contextual dependency of meaning-making processes. In scientific discourse, «labour» is treated as an abstract and systemic phenomenon, closely tied to theories of economics, social structures, and cognitive categorization. It is examined through quantifiable indicators, such as labour markets, productivity, and workforce dynamics, which serve to generalize and structure the concept for analytical and theoretical purposes. Conversely, in professional discourse, the concept of «labour» is grounded in practice and specific occupational realities. Here, it is experienced and described through immediate, task-related activities, with an emphasis on the physical, procedural, or technical dimensions of work. The diversity of professional contexts—ranging from medicine and education to industry and law—leads to a nuanced and varied interpretation of labour, often

shaped by the goals, tools, and values of each field.

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