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## THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CONCEPT OF “WORK” IN UZBEK AND FRENCH PROVERBS

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### Abstract

This article analyzes the linguo-cultural characteristics of the concept of “work” in French and Uzbek proverbs. Through the language and content of the proverbs, the attitudes of the two peoples toward work, their moral values, as well as the similarities and differences in their cultural thinking are revealed. The results of the research show that although the concept of “work” is interpreted in both cultures as a source of human perfection and well-being, their cultural foundations and modes of linguistic expression differ considerably.

**Keywords:** Concept, linguoculture, proverb, work, French language, Uzbek language, popular folklore.

### Introduction

Work occupies an essential place in the life of every society, not only as an economic activity but also as a moral and spiritual value. In both Uzbek and French cultures, it is perceived as a fundamental condition for individual and collective development. Proverbs, as a condensed form of popular wisdom, vividly reflect the cultural and linguistic representations related to work.

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This study aims to analyze, from a linguo-cultural and comparative perspective, how the concept of “work” is manifested in Uzbek and French proverbs. The analysis is based on the semantic content and stylistic features of the proverbs in order to highlight the values, beliefs, and worldviews specific to each people.

The significance of this research lies in understanding universal similarities—such as the appreciation of effort, perseverance, and dignity—as well as cultural differences that are expressed through the images, metaphors, and linguistic forms used to describe work in the two traditions.

Uzbek proverbs constitute an essential part of popular wisdom. They reflect the worldview, moral values, and life philosophy of the people. Among the most frequent themes, **work** (in Uzbek: **mehnat**) occupies a central place. The history of the Uzbek people, closely linked to agriculture, animal husbandry, and craftsmanship, has made work a fundamental criterion of human life.

French proverbs, like those of many cultures, express popular wisdom and moral values transmitted across generations. Work holds a central place in them, reflecting a society attached to the value of effort, discipline, and individual responsibility. In these proverbs, work is both a source of wealth, a means of dignity, and a factor of moral success.

### “Uzbek Proverbs” — “French Proverbs”

#### Work as a Source of Success and Prosperity

“Mehnat — baxt keltirar<sup>1</sup>.” **Translation:** Work is the key to happiness.

“Mehnat qilgan to‘yadi, yalqov och qoladi.” **Translation:** The one who works eats his fill; the lazy one remains hungry.

#### Translation of the second sentence:

In Uzbek proverbs, “work” is presented as the guarantee of human well-being and happiness.

<sup>1</sup> T.Mirzayev, A. Musoqulov, B Sarimsoqov. *O‘zbek xalq maqollari*. Toshkent. 2005.

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### French Proverbs

« C'est en forgeant qu'on devient forgeron<sup>2</sup>. »

« À cœur vaillant, rien d'impossible. »

« Qui travaille, récolte. »

« Qui ne travaille pas, ne mange pas<sup>3</sup>. »

« Plus on travaille, moins on s'ennuie. »

### In French proverbs:

These proverbs emphasize constant effort and experience as conditions for success. Work makes it possible to acquire skill, confidence, and recognition.

### Work — a Means of Personal Fulfillment

“Mehnatli kishi elga manzur, mehnatsiz kishi — g'amga dildur.”

Translation: A hardworking person is respected by the people, a lazy one is full of sorrow.

“Kim mehnat qilsa, u topadi.”

Translation: Whoever works, gains.

### In Uzbek proverbs:

Work elevates a person and teaches patience, modesty, and responsibility.

### The Criticism of Laziness and Idleness

“Yalqovning noni — yarimta.”

Translation: “The lazy person's bread is always only half.”

“Harakatda — barakat.”

Translation: “Blessing lies in movement.”

### In French proverbs:

Proverbs firmly condemn laziness, which is opposed to work.

« L'oisiveté est la mère de tous les vices. »

« Oisif à vingt ans, mendiant à quarante. »

« Le travail n'a jamais tué personne. »

<sup>2</sup> Sylvie Moy. *100 Proverbes français et leurs significations*. France 2012

<sup>3</sup> K.Mirhaydarova, S.Musayev, T.Aliqulov. *Fransuzcha maqollarningo'zbekcha-ruscha muqobillari*. Toshkent. O'qituvchi 1994. Bet 20.

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In Uzbek proverbs, the lack of activity is presented as a source of moral and social decline. A man without work loses his place in the community. Work is seen as a fundamental value that guarantees dignity, respect, and stability.

Uzbek proverbs also emphasize the value of the fruits of labor:

“Mehnatning tagi rohat.”

“Mehnat qilgan odamning qo‘li gul.”

“Mehnatsiz rohat yo‘q.”

“Mehnat — baxt kaliti.”

“Mehnat qilgan odam — baxt topadi.”

“Birovning bergani — ko‘rgulik, Mehnatning bergani — to‘ygulik.”

Through these expressions, work is portrayed as difficult, yet its results are lasting and rewarding. Success is the fruit of effort, perseverance, and continuous labor. Well-being and prosperity come not from dependence on others, but from one’s own work.

In Uzbek folk wisdom, working does not only mean earning a living; it also means preserving one’s honor, social position, and inner balance.

### **In French proverbs:**

« Après la pluie, le beau temps. »

« À chaque jour suffit sa peine. »

« La chance aide parfois, le travail toujours. »

« Le succès est la somme de petits efforts, répétés jours après jour. »

« Tout salaire mérite travail. »

« Le travail est un trésor. »

« La suprême récompense du travail n'est pas ce qu'il vous permet de gagner, mais ce qu'il vous permet de devenir. »

« Le travail éloigne de nous trois grands maux : l’ennui, le vice et le besoin<sup>4</sup>. »

**“Work keeps at bay three great evils: boredom, vice, and need.”**

<sup>4</sup> Voltaire. *Candide ou l’Optimisme*. France, Garnier-Flammarion – 2007. P.-193

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In French proverbs, this idea reflects a true philosophy of merit and patience: every effort is eventually rewarded, even if the result takes time. Work is therefore seen as a path to dignity, stability, and personal fulfillment.

### **Collective work and unity**

**“Bir yoqadan bosh chiqarsa, tog‘ siljiydi.”**

Translation: “When everyone pulls in the same direction, the mountain moves.”

**“Ko‘pning kuchi — tog‘ni buzadi.”**

Translation: “The strength of the many can bring down a mountain.”

These proverbs praise teamwork, solidarity, and cooperation in work. They show that the union of efforts makes it possible to overcome the greatest difficulties and to achieve goals that would be impossible to reach alone.

### **Cultural aspects of the concept of “work” in Uzbek culture:**

- In Uzbek thought, honesty and love of work are inseparable.
- Work is not only a material necessity, but also a moral and spiritual value.
- The agricultural way of life is reflected through symbolic images: plowing, sowing, harvesting, and so on.

### **Cultural and philosophical aspects in French culture:**

- Work is linked to the Christian moral idea of duty, as well as to the republican ideal of merit.
- It expresses a tension between necessary effort and the pursuit of happiness: working, yes, but without sacrificing the joy of living.
- Many proverbs reflect this duality between labor and moderation, between individual merit and collective solidarity.

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### Comparative analysis

Main criterion	In Uzbek proverbs	In French proverbs
Essential value	Honesty, patience, blessing	Discipline, responsibility, freedom
Result of work	Subsistence, happiness, serenity	Perfection, health, success
Cultural foundation	Religious and moral view of the world (Islamic values)	Secular and rational thinking (European humanism)
Emotional tone	Warm, spiritual, didactic	Pragmatic, realistic, individualistic
Goal	Collective prosperity	Personal success

As can be seen from this comparison, in Uzbek proverbs, work is perceived as a spiritual value and a symbol of honesty, whereas in French proverbs it is regarded as a means of personal fulfillment and social responsibility.

### Conclusion

This article examines the linguo-cultural characteristics of the concept of “work” in French and Uzbek proverbs. Through an analysis of proverbial language and content, it highlights the perception of work, moral values, and the particularities of cultural thinking in both societies.

The results show that in both cultures, work is considered the key to well-being and human perfection. However, the cultural foundations and the linguistic forms of expression differ significantly: Uzbek proverbs emphasize the importance of collective effort and labor-based morality, while French proverbs stress the value of individual effort, merit, and moderation in work.

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