

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF TIME IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

Muminova Nafosat Samijonovna

English Teacher at Secondary School No. 81, Samarkand City.

nafosatmuminova055@gmail.com

Abstract: The concept of time occupies an important position in the linguistic and cognitive worldview of every nation. Although time is a universal phenomenon, it is conceptualized and expressed differently in various languages and cultures. The English and Uzbek languages demonstrate both common and distinctive ways of representing temporal relations. This thesis examines the conceptualization of time in English and Uzbek from linguistic, cognitive, and cultural perspectives. Particular attention is paid to temporal vocabulary, grammatical forms, metaphors, phraseological units, and culturally determined expressions. The analysis demonstrates that English and Uzbek share a number of universal temporal concepts, while their linguistic realization reflects specific cultural and cognitive patterns.

Keywords: time, conceptualization, cognitive linguistics, English, Uzbek, temporal expressions, metaphor, linguistic worldview, culture.

INTRODUCTION

Time is one of the most fundamental concepts in human cognition. Every individual experiences time through changes in the surrounding world, biological processes, social activities, and personal experience. Despite its universal character, time does not have exactly the same linguistic representation in different languages. Each language provides its speakers with particular lexical, grammatical, metaphorical, and phraseological means for describing temporal relations.

The study of time is especially important in cognitive linguistics because language reflects the way people perceive, categorize, and conceptualize reality.

The concept of time is not limited to grammatical tense. It is represented through nouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, idiomatic expressions, metaphors, proverbs, and culturally significant constructions.

English and Uzbek belong to different language families and have different grammatical structures. English is a Germanic language, whereas Uzbek belongs to the Turkic language family. Consequently, the two languages provide an interesting basis for comparative research into temporal conceptualization. The main purpose of this thesis is to identify similarities and differences in the conceptualization of time in English and Uzbek. The study focuses on the linguistic means through which temporal relations are expressed and the cultural ideas associated with the concept of time.

The Concept of Time in Cognitive Linguistics

In cognitive linguistics, a concept is understood as a mental structure through which people organize and interpret information about the world. Concepts are reflected in language, but they are not identical to individual words. One concept may be represented by a large group of lexical, grammatical, and phraseological units.

Time is an abstract concept because it cannot be directly observed as a physical object. People understand time through events, changes, movements, and spatial relations. Therefore, temporal concepts are frequently expressed by means of metaphors.

For example, English speakers commonly use expressions such as “the future is ahead” and “the past is behind.” Similar conceptual patterns can also be found in Uzbek. Expressions such as “kelajak oldinda” and “o'tmish ortda” demonstrate the association of time with spatial direction.

Another important feature of temporal conceptualization is the division of time into past, present, and future. This tripartite division is universal at the conceptual level, although languages differ in the ways these categories are grammatically and lexically expressed.

Time can also be conceptualized as a moving entity. English contains

expressions such as “time flies,” “the years pass,” and “the future is approaching.” Uzbek also has similar expressions based on movement, for example, “vaqt o'tmoqda” and “yillar o'tib bormoqda.” Such examples demonstrate that both languages use the metaphor of movement to make the abstract concept of time more understandable.

Lexical Representation of Time in English and Uzbek
Both English and Uzbek possess extensive lexical systems for expressing temporal meanings.

In English, basic temporal vocabulary includes words such as time, day, night, morning, evening, week, month, year, past, present, future, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Uzbek equivalents include vaqt, kun, tun, ertalab, kechqurun, hafta, oy, yil, o'tmish, hozirgi zamon, kelajak, kecha, bugun, and ertaga. The word time in English is particularly broad in meaning. It can refer to duration, a particular moment, an occasion, or a period. For example, the expression “What time is it?” refers to a particular point in time, whereas “I need more time” refers to duration.

The Uzbek word vaqt also has a broad semantic range. It can refer to duration, an appropriate moment, or a period. For instance, “Vaqtim yo'q” means “I do not have time,” while “Vaqti keldi” can mean “The time has come.” Both languages have lexical units that divide the day into different periods. English uses morning, afternoon, evening, and night, while Uzbek commonly uses ertalab, tush, tushdan keyin, kechqurun, and tun. Although these categories are broadly comparable, their cultural and contextual usage may differ. Temporal vocabulary also includes words indicating relative distance from the present. English uses yesterday, today, tomorrow, recently, soon, later, and already. Uzbek has corresponding expressions such as kecha, bugun, ertaga, yaqinda, tez orada, keyin, and allaqachon.

Thus, the lexical systems of English and Uzbek reveal a significant degree of conceptual similarity, while differences occur in semantic nuances and contextual usage.

Grammatical Conceptualization of Time

Grammar plays a significant role in representing temporal relations. English and Uzbek both possess grammatical categories that allow speakers to locate events in relation to time.

English traditionally distinguishes three major tense categories: present, past, and future. These categories are expressed through different grammatical structures. For example:

- I work every day.
- I worked yesterday.
- I will work tomorrow.

English also has aspectual distinctions that provide additional information about the temporal structure of an event. The contrast between simple, progressive, perfect, and perfect progressive forms allows speakers to describe whether an action is completed, ongoing, repeated, or connected with another temporal point. Uzbek also has a developed system of tense forms. The language uses various suffixes and auxiliary constructions to indicate temporal relations. For example:

- Men ishlayman — I work / I will work.
- Men ishladim — I worked.
- Men ishlayapman — I am working.
- Men ishlaganman — I have worked / I have had the experience of working.

One important difference is that English relies heavily on auxiliary verbs and relatively fixed grammatical constructions, whereas Uzbek predominantly expresses tense and aspect through suffixation and auxiliary elements. The Uzbek verbal system demonstrates that temporal meaning is closely connected with evidential, aspectual, and modal meanings in certain contexts. Therefore, grammatical time cannot always be separated completely from other categories of meaning.

Metaphorical Conceptualization of Time

One of the most productive ways of conceptualizing time is metaphor. Since time is abstract, people frequently understand it through more concrete domains

such as space, movement, money, objects, and natural phenomena. A well-known metaphor in English is TIME IS MONEY. This conceptual metaphor is reflected in expressions such as “save time,” “waste time,” “spend time,” and “invest time.” These expressions conceptualize time as a valuable resource that can be saved, spent, wasted, or invested. Uzbek also contains expressions that conceptualize time as a valuable resource. For example, “vaqtni tejamoq” means “to save time,” while “vaqtni bekorga sarflamoq” means “to waste time.” Therefore, the idea that time has value is shared by both linguistic cultures.

Another important metaphor is TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT. English expressions such as “time passes,” “the future is coming,” and “the years are going by” demonstrate this conceptualization. Uzbek similarly uses expressions such as “vaqt o'tmoqda,” “yillar o'tib bormoqda,” and “kunlar kelib-ketmoqda.” The metaphor TIME IS SPACE is also common. English speakers say “in the past,” “in the future,” “before the meeting,” and “after the event.” Uzbek has corresponding expressions such as “o'tmishda,” “kelajakda,” “uchrashuvdan oldin,” and “tadbirdan keyin.”

These examples demonstrate that spatial relations provide an important cognitive model for understanding temporal relations in both languages.

Phraseological Representation of Time

Phraseological units provide valuable information about the cultural conceptualization of time. Idioms and proverbs often express people's attitudes toward time, its value, and its relationship with human life. English contains numerous expressions related to time, including “time is precious,” “in no time,” “at the right time,” and “once in a while.” These expressions demonstrate different aspects of temporal experience. Uzbek also has many phraseological expressions related to time. For example, “vaqtida” expresses the idea of doing something at the appropriate moment, while “vaqtni boy bermiq” conveys the meaning of missing or losing an opportunity. Proverbs are particularly significant because they reflect collective cultural

experience. The English proverb “Time is money” emphasizes the economic value of time. Uzbek culture also contains proverbs emphasizing the importance of time and opportunity, such as “Vaqt g‘animat”, which conveys the idea that time is precious and should not be wasted.

Another important feature is the relationship between time and patience.

Both English and Uzbek contain expressions suggesting that successful results require time. This reflects a universal human understanding that certain processes cannot be accelerated indefinitely.

Cultural Aspects of Time Conceptualization
The linguistic representation of time is closely connected with culture. Different societies may have different attitudes toward punctuality, duration, planning, and the relationship between past and future.

In contemporary English-speaking cultures, particularly in professional contexts, punctuality and precise scheduling are generally highly valued. Expressions such as “on time,” “ahead of schedule,” and “behind schedule” demonstrate the importance of organizing activities according to a specific timetable.

Uzbek cultural communication may demonstrate a somewhat more context-dependent approach to temporal organization, especially in informal and social situations. However, modern education, business, and professional communication increasingly emphasize punctuality and precise time management. The concept of the past also has cultural significance. In Uzbek culture, historical memory, ancestors, traditions, and cultural heritage play an important role. Consequently, references to the past may carry not only temporal but also emotional and cultural meanings.

The future, in turn, is frequently associated with hope, development, children, education, and national progress. Expressions connected with kelajak often imply aspirations and expectations.

Thus, temporal concepts cannot be analyzed exclusively from a grammatical perspective. Their interpretation is influenced by cultural values, social practices,

historical experience, and collective worldview.

Similarities and Differences

The comparative analysis shows that English and Uzbek share several fundamental characteristics in their conceptualization of time. First, both languages distinguish past, present, and future. Second, both use spatial metaphors to conceptualize temporal relations. Third, time can be represented as movement and as a valuable resource. Fourth, both languages possess rich phraseological systems related to time.

At the same time, significant differences can be observed. English and Uzbek have different grammatical structures for expressing tense and aspect. English frequently uses auxiliary verbs and combinations of grammatical forms, whereas Uzbek primarily relies on verbal suffixes and auxiliary constructions. There are also differences in the lexical categorization of periods of the day and in culturally specific phraseological units. Some temporal expressions have direct equivalents in the two languages, while others require contextual or descriptive translation.

These differences demonstrate that languages do not merely provide alternative labels for the same reality. They organize experience according to linguistic and cultural conventions.

CONCLUSION

The conceptualization of time in English and Uzbek represents a complex interaction between universal human cognition and language-specific cultural patterns. Time is a universal phenomenon, but its linguistic representation differs according to grammatical structure, vocabulary, metaphorical models, phraseology, and cultural experience.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that English and Uzbek share many conceptual models. In both languages, time can be understood as movement, space, and a valuable resource. The concepts of past, present, and future are also fundamental in both linguistic systems.

However, the grammatical realization of temporal meanings differs

considerably. English primarily employs auxiliary verbs, tense-aspect constructions, and relatively fixed grammatical patterns, whereas Uzbek uses verbal suffixes and auxiliary constructions more extensively. Phraseological expressions and metaphors demonstrate that the concept of time is closely connected with cultural values. The importance of time, the relationship between past and future, punctuality, patience, and the value of opportunity are reflected in the linguistic worldview of both peoples.

Therefore, the comparative study of temporal conceptualization is important not only for linguistics but also for translation studies, intercultural communication, language teaching, and cognitive research. Understanding how English and Uzbek conceptualize time can help learners recognize differences in linguistic worldview and communicate more effectively across cultures.

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