

SEMANTIC AND LINGUOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE LEXICAL COMPONENT "TIME" IN ENGLISH AND ITS UZBEK EQUIVALENTS

<https://doi.org/10.70728/phil.v05.i06.035>

Raimberdiyeva Muhliisa Nuraliyevna
Uzbekistan State World Languages University

Abstract: The present study investigates the semantic and linguocultural characteristics of the lexical component time in English and its Uzbek equivalents *vaqt*, *zamon*, *davr*, and *palla*. The research focuses on the polysemantic structure of the lexeme, its literal and figurative meanings, metaphorical extensions, and conceptual representations in English and Uzbek linguistic worldviews. The study is based on semantic, componential, comparative, cognitive, and linguocultural approaches. Particular attention is paid to the conceptualization of time as a culturally conditioned phenomenon reflected in language. The findings indicate that the semantic field of the English lexeme time is distributed among several lexical units in Uzbek, each of which represents specific conceptual and cultural dimensions. The research contributes to contemporary studies in semantics, cognitive linguistics, translation studies, and linguoculturology.

Keywords: time, semantics, polysemy, temporal concept, conceptual metaphor, linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics, translation studies, English language, Uzbek language

Introduction

Time is one of the most fundamental dimensions of human existence and cognition. It serves as a universal framework through which people perceive reality, organize experiences, and interpret events occurring in the surrounding world. Despite its universality, the conceptualization and linguistic representation of time vary significantly across languages and cultures. Consequently, the study of temporal concepts has become one of the most productive areas of modern linguistic research, particularly within semantics, cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, and linguoculturology.²⁴

Language not only reflects objective reality but also encodes culturally specific ways of understanding that reality. The concept of time occupies a special position

²⁴ Evans, V. (2009). *How Words Mean: Lexical Concepts, Cognitive Models and Meaning Construction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 15–22.

among universal concepts because it integrates physical, psychological, philosophical, and cultural dimensions.²⁵

The complexity of the lexeme becomes even more apparent when translation issues are considered. In many contexts, the English word *time* cannot be translated into Uzbek by a single lexical equivalent. Instead, translators must choose among several lexical units, including *vaqt*, *zamon*, *davr*, *palla*, *fursat*, and *muddat*. Each of these units reflects a specific aspect of temporal conceptualization and carries distinct semantic and cultural implications.

The increasing interest in cross-cultural communication and translation studies has further enhanced the importance of investigating temporal concepts. Globalization processes have intensified intercultural interactions, making it necessary to understand not only linguistic differences but also conceptual distinctions embedded within languages. Since concepts represent culturally shaped cognitive structures, their analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of intercultural communication and translation equivalence.

Literature Review

The Concept of Time in Linguistic Research

The concept of time has been one of the most extensively studied categories in philosophy, linguistics, psychology, and anthropology. As a universal dimension of human experience, time serves as a framework through which individuals perceive reality, organize events, and construct knowledge about the world. Consequently, the linguistic representation of time has attracted considerable scholarly attention across various theoretical paradigms.

Polysemy as a Linguistic Phenomenon. Polysemy refers to the capacity of a lexical unit to possess multiple related meanings. It represents one of the most fundamental characteristics of natural language vocabulary and reflects the dynamic nature of semantic development.²⁶ Scholars generally agree that polysemy emerges through processes of semantic extension, metaphorization, metonymy, and contextual reinterpretation.²⁷

The English lexeme *time* constitutes a clear example of a highly polysemous word.) The multiplicity of meanings associated with the lexeme demonstrates the complexity of temporal conceptualization in English.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Temporal Conceptualization. One of the most influential approaches to temporal semantics is Conceptual Metaphor Theory developed by Lakoff and Johnson (2003). According to this theory, abstract concepts

²⁵ Fillmore, C. J. (1982). "Frame Semantics and the Nature of Language." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 280, pp. 20–32.

²⁶ Cruse, D. A. (2011). *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 108–114.

²⁷ Allan, K. (2016). *The Meaning of Language*. London: Routledge, pp. 143–149.

are understood through metaphorical mappings derived from concrete physical experience.

Since time cannot be directly perceived through sensory experience, speakers conceptualize it through more tangible domains such as space, movement, and economics. As a result, several conceptual metaphors have become deeply embedded in everyday language.

Linguocultural Approaches to Time. Linguoculturology examines the interaction between language and culture, emphasizing how linguistic units encode culturally specific knowledge and values. Within this framework, concepts are regarded as mental formations reflecting collective cultural experience²⁸.

In Uzbek culture, however, temporal concepts often carry philosophical, ethical, and social connotations. Proverbs and phraseological units demonstrate the cultural significance of patience, experience, and respect for natural cycles. Examples include:

Har ishning o'z vaqti bor.

Vaqt oltindan qimmat.

Zamon o'zgaradi, inson o'zgaradi.

These expressions indicate that time is perceived not only as a measurable quantity but also as a moral and cultural value.

Methods

Research Design. The present study employs a qualitative comparative research design integrating semantic, cognitive, componential, and linguocultural approaches. Since the concept of time represents a multidimensional phenomenon involving linguistic, cognitive, and cultural aspects, an interdisciplinary methodology was considered appropriate for achieving the objectives of the research.

The investigation focuses on the lexical component time in English and its Uzbek equivalents *vaqt*, *zamon*, *davr*, and *palla*. The analysis aims to identify semantic similarities and differences, conceptual structures, and cultural interpretations associated with temporal vocabulary in both languages.

Research Materials. The research materials consist of:

1. English explanatory dictionaries, including the Oxford English Dictionary, Cambridge Dictionary, and Merriam-Webster Dictionary;
2. Uzbek explanatory dictionaries and lexicographic sources;
3. English literary texts, newspapers, and academic publications;
4. Uzbek literary and journalistic texts;
5. Phraseological units, proverbs, and idiomatic expressions related to time;
6. Examples cited in previous linguistic studies concerning temporal concepts.

²⁸ Dirven, R., & Verspoor, M. (2004). *Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 17–21.

These materials provide a sufficient basis for identifying lexical meanings, semantic extensions, and cultural associations related to temporal vocabulary

Research Methods. Semantic Analysis Semantic analysis was applied to identify the meanings associated with the lexeme time and its Uzbek equivalents. This method enabled the classification of literal, figurative, and metaphorical meanings.

Componential Analysis. Componential analysis was used to reveal elementary semantic features (semes) constituting the meanings of temporal lexemes. Through this approach, common and distinctive semantic components were identified.

Comparative Analysis. The comparative method was employed to examine similarities and differences between English and Uzbek temporal vocabulary. Particular attention was paid to semantic equivalence and translation correspondence.

RESULTS

Polysemantic Structure of the Lexeme "Time". One of the most remarkable characteristics of the English lexeme time is its extensive polysemantic structure. Lexicographic analysis demonstrates that the word possesses a wide range of meanings interconnected through semantic extension and conceptual association.

The investigation revealed that the semantic structure of time can be classified into several major categories.

Time as Duration. The primary meaning of the lexeme refers to the continuous progression of existence measured through hours, days, months, and years.

Examples:

Time passes quickly.

Time heals all wounds.

Time waits for no one.

In these examples, time denotes an abstract and continuous dimension within which events occur.

The corresponding Uzbek equivalent is typically vaqt.

Examples:

Vaqt tez o'tadi.

Vaqt hamma dardga davo.

This meaning represents the core semantic component of temporal continuity.

Time as a Measurable Quantity. Another important meaning refers to specific temporal measurements.

Examples:

What time is it?

The meeting starts at six o'clock.

It is time to leave.

In this context, time functions as an objectively measurable entity.

Uzbek equivalents include:

soat;

vaqt.

Examples:

Soat necha bo'ldi?

Ketish vaqti keldi.

This meaning reflects the practical and quantitative aspect of temporal experience.

Time as an Occasion

The lexeme frequently denotes a particular occasion or event.

Examples:

It is time for lunch.

The time has come.

This is the perfect time to start.

In such cases, time refers to a suitable or expected moment for performing an action.

Uzbek translations often include:

payt;

fursat;

vaqt.

Examples:

Ovqatlanish vaqti keldi.

Fursat yetdi.

Time as a Historical Period

The word may also refer to a specific historical epoch.

Examples:

Ancient times.

Modern times.

Medieval times.

Here the meaning shifts from measurable duration to sociohistorical periods characterized by particular cultural and political conditions.

The most appropriate Uzbek equivalents are:

zamon;

davr.

Examples:

Qadimgi zamonlar.

Mustaqillik davri.

This meaning demonstrates the close relationship between temporal concepts and collective historical memory.

Time as Opportunity. Another common meaning involves opportunity or favorable circumstances.

Examples:

I need time to think.

Give me some time.

Take your time.

In these examples, time refers to available opportunity rather than objective duration.

The closest Uzbek equivalents are:

fursat;

imkon;

vaqt.

Examples:

Menga o'ylash uchun vaqt kerak.

Menga biroz fursat bering.

This meaning highlights the psychological and pragmatic dimensions of temporal experience.

Semantic Classification of the Lexeme "Time". The analysis demonstrates that the lexeme time possesses a hierarchical semantic structure organized around several central semantic components.

Table 1.

Core Semantic Meanings of "Time"

Meaning	Example	Uzbek Equivalent
Duration	Time passes quickly	Vaqt
Measurement	What time is it?	Soat/Vaqt
Occasion	The time has come	Payt/Fursat
Historical Period	Ancient times	Zamon/Davr
Repetition	Third time	Marotaba
Opportunity	Take your time	Fursat

The findings indicate that the English lexical unit time covers a significantly broader semantic field than any single Uzbek equivalent. Consequently, translators must rely heavily on contextual interpretation when selecting appropriate lexical correspondences.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study provide important insights into the relationship between language, cognition, and culture in the conceptualization of time. The semantic analysis confirms that the English lexeme time represents a highly polysemous lexical unit characterized by a complex network of interconnected meanings. The identified meanings include duration, measurement, historical period, repetition, opportunity, and temporal progression.

These findings support the observations of Cruse (2011) and Evans (2009), who argue that lexical meaning should be understood as a dynamic conceptual structure rather than a fixed set of dictionary definitions. The componential analysis further demonstrates that semantic complexity is achieved through the interaction of multiple elementary semantic features. Different contextual meanings emerge through the activation of particular semantic components, confirming cognitive approaches to lexical semantics. The study also demonstrates the influence of culture on temporal conceptualization. While English-speaking cultures frequently associate time with productivity, efficiency, and economic value, Uzbek linguistic culture emphasizes wisdom, patience, historical continuity, and social experience.

These differences become especially visible in proverbs, idioms, and phraseological expressions.

For example, English expressions such as:

Time is money;

Save time;

By contrast, Uzbek expressions such as:

Har ishning o'z vaqti bor;

Vaqt oltindan qimmat; highlight moral, philosophical, and cultural dimensions of temporal experience.

The comparative analysis therefore supports the view that language reflects culturally specific models of reality. From a translation perspective, the findings indicate that semantic equivalence between English and Uzbek temporal vocabulary cannot always be achieved through direct lexical substitution. Instead, successful translation requires consideration of contextual meaning, conceptual structure, and cultural significance. The results confirm that translation is not merely a linguistic process but also a cognitive and cultural activity involving the transfer of conceptual knowledge between languages and cultures.

CONCLUSION

The present study has examined the semantic and linguocultural characteristics of the English lexical component time and its Uzbek equivalents vaqt, zamon, davr, and palla. The findings demonstrate that temporal vocabulary represents one of the most complex and culturally significant domains within the lexical systems of both languages.

The semantic analysis revealed that the English lexeme time possesses a highly developed polysemantic structure encompassing multiple meanings, including duration, temporal measurement, opportunity, repetition, historical period, and developmental stage. These meanings are interconnected through a network of semantic relations that reflect both linguistic and cognitive processes.

The componential analysis showed that the semantic field of time cannot be fully represented by any single Uzbek lexical equivalent. Instead, the meanings associated with time are distributed among several lexical units, each highlighting specific semantic features. While *vaqt* primarily expresses duration and measurable temporal intervals, *zamon* emphasizes historical and social dimensions, *davr* denotes bounded historical or developmental periods, and *palla* reflects culturally specific stages and phases of experience. The linguocultural analysis further revealed significant differences between English and Uzbek conceptualizations of time. English linguistic culture tends to associate time with productivity, efficiency, planning, and economic value, whereas Uzbek linguistic culture places greater emphasis on wisdom, patience, social experience, and historical continuity. These cultural distinctions are reflected in proverbs, idiomatic expressions, and lexical choices.

The findings also have important implications for translation studies. Since temporal concepts are shaped by both linguistic and cultural factors, translators must go beyond direct lexical equivalence and consider conceptual, contextual, and cultural dimensions when rendering temporal expressions from one language into another.

The theoretical significance of the research lies in its contribution to lexical semantics, cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor theory, and linguoculturology. The practical significance is connected with applications in translation studies, foreign language teaching, intercultural communication, and lexicography.

Future research may expand the present investigation by incorporating corpus-based analyses, psycholinguistic experiments, and broader cross-cultural comparisons involving additional languages. Such studies would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of temporal conceptualization as a universal yet culturally variable phenomenon.

References

1. Allan, K. (2016). *The Meaning of Language*. London: Routledge.
2. Boroditsky, L. (2011). How Languages Construct Time. *Scientific American*, 304(2), 62-65.
3. Cruse, D. A. (2011). *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
4. Dirven, R., & Verspoor, M. (2004). *Cognitive Exploration of Language and Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
5. Evans, V. (2009). *How Words Mean: Lexical Concepts, Cognitive Models and Meaning Construction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
6. Fillmore, C. J. (1982). Frame Semantics and the Nature of Language. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 280, 20-32.

7. Johnson, M. (1987). *The Body in the Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
8. Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
9. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
10. Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
11. Nida, E. A. (1964). *Toward a Science of Translating*. Leiden: Brill.