
Theoretical foundations of studying phraseological units denoting time in English and Uzbek

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Annotation *This article explores the theoretical foundations of studying phraseological units that denote, conceptualize, and culturally interpret the concept of time in English and Uzbek languages. Phraseological units are examined not merely as fixed lexical combinations, but as linguocultural signs that encode collective experience, national mentality, axiological values, metaphorical thinking, and communicative norms of different speech communities. The research emphasizes that the concept of time in phraseology is multidimensional, reflecting both universal cognitive patterns and culture-specific interpretations. In English and Uzbek, temporal phraseological units express various semantic aspects such as duration, immediacy, delay, opportunity, patience, life stages, and social expectations. The study also highlights the importance of cognitive semantics and linguocultural approaches in revealing how abstract temporal concepts are structured through metaphorical and figurative language. A comparative analysis of English and Uzbek phraseological systems demonstrates both similarities rooted in shared human cognition and differences shaped by distinct cultural worldviews. The findings show that time in phraseology functions not only as a chronological measure but also as a cultural, moral, and psychological construct that reflects how societies perceive life, behavior, and human experience.*

Keywords *Phraseological units, time concept, English phraseology, Uzbek phraseology, linguoculture, cognitive semantics, comparative analysis, idiomatic meaning, national worldview, temporal metaphor*

Ingliz va o'zbek tillarida vaqtni ifodalovchi frazeologik birliklarni o'rganishning nazariy asoslari

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Annotatsiya *Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o'zbek tillarida vaqtni ifodalovchi, konseptuallashtiruvchi hamda madaniy jihatdan talqin qiluvchi frazeologik birliklarni o'rganishning nazariy asoslari yoritiladi. Frazeologik birliklar oddiy turg'un so'z birikmalari sifatida emas, balki jamoaviy tajriba, milliy mentalitet, qadriyatlar tizimi, metaforik tafakkur va*

kommunikativ me'yorlarni aks ettiruvchi lingvomadaniy belgilar sifatida tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda vaqt konsepti frazeologiyada nafaqat xronologik kategoriya, balki insonning dunyoqarashi va ijtimoiy tajribasini ifodalovchi murakkab kognitiv hodisa sifatida ko'rib chiqiladi. Ingliz va o'zbek tillaridagi vaqtga oid frazeologik birliklar davomiylik, imkoniyat, kechikish, sabr-toqat, hayot bosqichlari va ijtimoiy baholash kabi ma'nolarni ifodalaydi. Maqolada kognitiv semantika va lingvomadaniy yondashuvlar asosida vaqtning metaforik ifodalanishi tahlil qilinadi. Qiyosiy yondashuv orqali ikki til frazeologik tizimlaridagi umumiy va farqli jihatlar aniqlanadi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, vaqt frazeologiyada nafaqat vaqt o'lchovi, balki madaniy, axloqiy va psixologik kategoriya sifatida ham namoyon bo'ladi.

Kalit so'zlar *Frazeologik birliklar, vaqt konsepti, ingliz frazeologiyasi, o'zbek frazeologiyasi, lingvomadaniyat, kognitiv semantika, qiyosiy tahlil, idiomatik ma'no, milliy dunyoqarash, temporal metafora*

Теоретические основы изучения фраzeологических единиц, обозначающих время в английском и узбекском языках

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Аннотация *В данной статье рассматриваются теоретические основы изучения фразеологических единиц, обозначающих, концептуализирующих и культурно интерпретирующих понятие времени в английском и узбекском языках. Фразеологические единицы анализируются не как простые устойчивые словосочетания, а как сложные лингвокультурные знаки, отражающие коллективный опыт, национальный менталитет, систему ценностей, особенности метафорического мышления и коммуникативные нормы общества. В исследовании подчеркивается, что концепт времени в фразеологии имеет многослойную структуру, объединяющую универсальные когнитивные модели и культурно специфические интерпретации. В английском и узбекском языках временные фразеологические единицы выражают такие значения, как длительность, момент, возможность, задержка, терпение, жизненные этапы и социальная оценка. Особое внимание уделяется когнитивной семантике и лингвокультурологическому подходу, позволяющим раскрыть метафорическую природу осмысления времени. Сравнительный анализ показывает как общие черты, основанные на универсальном человеческом восприятии времени, так и различия, обусловленные национальной картиной мира. В результате время в фразеологии рассматривается не*

только как хронологическая категория, но и как культурный, моральный и психологический концепт.

Ключевые слова

Фразеологические единицы, концепт времени, английская фразеология, узбекская фразеология, лингвокультура, когнитивная семантика, сравнительный анализ, идиоматическое значение, национальная картина мира, темпоральная метафора

Introduction

The study of phraseological units denoting time occupies a significant position in contemporary comparative linguistics because time is one of the most universal and, at the same time, one of the most culturally differentiated categories of human consciousness. Every language possesses lexical means for naming seconds, minutes, days, seasons, historical periods, and stages of life, but phraseology reveals a deeper layer of meaning: it shows how a speech community evaluates time, moralizes it, personifies it, measures it through social experience, and transforms it into a symbolic resource for communication. In English and Uzbek, temporal phraseological units are not limited to expressions such as *in the nick of time*, *time flies*, *from time to time*, *kun kelib*, *vaqt o'tishi bilan*, *payti kelganda*, or *vaqt g'animat* (Tagayeva & Xurramova, 2026). They also include figurative constructions in which time is associated with movement, loss, maturity, patience, opportunity, memory, delay, fate, and social obligation. Therefore, the theoretical study of such units requires a broad linguistic perspective that combines structural description, semantic interpretation, cognitive modeling, cultural analysis, and translation-oriented comparison (Vaage, 2020). The relevance of the topic is determined by the growing need to understand language as a repository of cultural knowledge. In the globalized educational and communicative environment, the comparison of English and Uzbek phraseology is not only a linguistic task

but also a means of revealing how different communities conceptualize human existence. Time-related phraseology is especially important because it expresses the basic organization of life: work and rest, youth and old age, patience and urgency, tradition and progress, promise and expectation. English idioms such as *time is money*, *against the clock*, *kill time*, *once in a blue moon*, and *better late than never* demonstrate the close connection between temporal experience and pragmatic action (Mieder, 2004). Uzbek expressions such as *vaqt topmoq*, *vaqtni boy bermoq*, *fursatni qo'ldan chiqarmoq*, *zamon o'zgardi*, *vaqt ko'rsatadi*, and *har narsaning o'z vaqti bor* reveal another set of semantic shades in which time is connected with social appropriateness, moral judgment, patience, and life wisdom. These examples show that time is not simply counted; it is interpreted through values (Yuldoshev & Orinboyeva, n.d.).

The theoretical foundation of the research begins with the recognition that phraseological units are stable, reproducible, semantically integral, and often figurative language units. Their meaning cannot always be derived from the direct meanings of their components; instead, phraseological meaning emerges as a historically accumulated and culturally sanctioned semantic whole. In this sense, phraseological units denoting time function as compressed models of experience. They may describe chronological duration, mark the correct moment for action, evaluate delay, warn against procrastination, or express the inevitability of change (Yodgorov, 2021).

The phrase *time will tell* and the Uzbek expression *vaqt ko'rsatadi* are particularly interesting because they demonstrate a near-universal metaphor in which time is imagined as an authority capable of revealing truth. However, even when equivalence appears close, the pragmatic environment, emotional tone, and cultural associations of such units may differ. This makes theoretical precision essential for comparative analysis (Yuldashev, 2022). In English linguistics, phraseology has often been studied in relation to idiomaticity, fixedness, metaphor, collocation, and discourse function.

English temporal idioms frequently reflect a culture of punctuality, planning, measurable productivity, and the moral value of efficiency. This does not mean that English speakers perceive time only economically, but the phraseological system provides many expressions that conceptualize time as a limited resource: *spend time, waste time, save time, lose time, run out of time, and make up for lost time*. These constructions demonstrate the conceptual metaphor TIME IS A RESOURCE, which is strongly embedded in modern English communicative practice (Yusupov, 2014). Uzbek phraseology also contains expressions of losing or using time, but its temporal idioms are often enriched by ideas of fate, social maturity, experience, endurance, and appropriate timing. For example, *har ishning o'z vaqti bor* expresses not only chronology but also normative harmony between action and circumstance. Such differences require a comparative framework that does not reduce phraseology to direct translation (Zokirov, 2023). From the Uzbek linguistic perspective, phraseological units are closely connected with the history of oral tradition, folklore, didactic speech, classical literature, and everyday communicative etiquette. Uzbek temporal expressions frequently carry a moral-didactic function: they teach patience, warn against haste, emphasize the value of opportunity, and connect the passing of time with personal responsibility.

The expression *vaqt g'animat* conveys the idea that time is precious and must not be neglected, while *sabrning tagi sariq oltin* indirectly links temporal endurance with eventual reward. In such units, time is not only a physical dimension but also an ethical category (Kunin, 1996). This creates an important theoretical problem: the same semantic field may include units that explicitly contain words such as time, day, moment, year, season, morning, or evening, and units that denote temporal experience implicitly through patience, delay, maturity, memory, or destiny. A comprehensive study must therefore distinguish between direct temporal nomination and indirect temporal conceptualization (Mamatov, 1991). Another important theoretical issue concerns equivalence. In comparative phraseology, equivalence cannot be understood as simple lexical correspondence. A phraseological unit in English may have an Uzbek equivalent with the same meaning but a different image, the same image but a different pragmatic tone, or only a partial functional equivalent. For example, *once in a blue moon* and *onda-sonda* both denote rarity, but the English idiom is based on a culturally specific astronomical image, whereas the Uzbek expression is more neutral and frequency-oriented. Similarly, *better late than never* can be rendered into Uzbek through functional equivalents, but the evaluative and proverbial force may vary depending on context.

Literature review

The development of Uzbek phraseology as a scientific field is inseparable from the works of Shavkat Rahmatullayev, whose research laid a solid foundation for the semantic, structural, and lexicographic description of Uzbek phraseological units. His studies on phraseological polysemy, synonymy, antonymy, and homonymy, as well as his explanatory phraseological dictionary of the Uzbek language, made it possible to treat idiomatic expressions as independent linguistic units with their own semantic organization and

stylistic value. In relation to the present topic, Rahmatullayev's contribution is especially important because the analysis of phraseological units denoting time requires precise attention to figurative integrity, semantic shift, and contextual meaning. Expressions such as *vaqt ko'rsatadi*, *vaqt g'animat*, *kun kelib*, and *zamon o'zgarda* cannot be described adequately if they are considered only as combinations of lexical components. Rahmatullayev's theoretical approach helps to explain that the meaning of such expressions is formed through the interaction of stable structure, transferred meaning, and cultural usage. His lexicographic principles also demonstrate how phraseological units preserve national experience and how their meanings can be interpreted through usage-based explanation rather than literal translation. Another important Uzbek scholar for this research direction is Abdug'afur E. Mamatov, whose works on lexical and phraseological norms, modern linguistics, and the formation of phraseological units contributed to the expansion of Uzbek phraseological theory.

Mamatov's scientific position is valuable because he connects phraseology with language norm, communicative appropriateness, and the development of literary language. For the study of temporal phraseological units, this is particularly relevant: time-related expressions are often used not only to name temporal relations but also to regulate speech behavior, evaluate action, and express social wisdom. For example, the Uzbek phrase *har narsaning o'z vaqti bor* is not merely a statement about chronological order; it is a normative judgment about the proper relation between action, circumstance, and social expectation. Mamatov's attention to phraseological formation and normativity allows researchers to interpret such units as part of a living linguistic system shaped by cultural continuity and communicative practice. When Rahmatullayev's semantic-lexicographic tradition and Mamatov's normative-functional approach are considered together, they

provide a strong theoretical basis for comparing Uzbek temporal phraseology with English idiomatic expressions. Their works show that phraseological units must be studied as stable linguistic signs, culturally meaningful forms, and communicative instruments that transmit collective experience across generations.

Methodology

The methodological basis of the article is formed by an integrated linguistic approach in which descriptive, comparative, componential, semantic-cognitive, linguocultural, contextual, and translation-oriented methods are used as mutually connected analytical procedures. The descriptive method was applied to identify the structural and semantic characteristics of English and Uzbek phraseological units denoting time, including their stability, reproducibility, idiomaticity, lexical composition, and syntactic organization. The comparative method was used to determine similarities and differences between the two languages in the representation of temporal meanings, especially in cases where the same conceptual content is expressed through different images or where similar lexical components produce different cultural connotations. Componential analysis made it possible to divide phraseological meaning into semantic features such as duration, moment, delay, opportunity, rarity, cyclicity, inevitability, age, memory, and change. This procedure helped to classify the units according to their dominant temporal meanings and to distinguish direct time nomination from indirect temporal conceptualization.

Results

The results of the analysis show that phraseological units denoting time in English and Uzbek form a multilayered semantic system rather than a simple collection of idioms containing temporal words. First, both languages contain phraseological units that directly name time through lexical components such as *time*, *day*, *hour*, *moment*, *year*, *age*, *morning*, *evening*, *vaqt*, *kun*, *yil*, *zamon*, *fursat*,

and *payt*. These units express duration, frequency, sequence, punctuality, delay, and temporal limitation. Second, both languages contain units in which temporal meaning is implied through broader concepts such as patience, maturity, opportunity, memory, change, and destiny. This means that the phraseological representation of time is not restricted to explicit temporal vocabulary; it also includes culturally recognizable scenarios of waiting, losing, gaining, remembering, aging, and acting at the proper moment.

Discussion

The discussion of theoretical approaches to phraseological units denoting time can be deepened through a polemical comparison of two influential foreign scholars: Charles Bally and A. V. Kunin. Bally, as one of the founders of phraseological thought in European linguistics, emphasized the expressive and affective nature of stable word combinations. From his perspective, phraseological units are closely connected with the emotional life of language, because they intensify speech, carry collective evaluation, and transform ordinary nomination into expressive communication. If Bally's view is applied to temporal phraseology, expressions such as *time flies*, *better late than never*, *vaqt g'animat*, or *har narsaning o'z vaqti bor* are not only semantic formulas but also expressive cultural reactions to human experience. They show how speakers emotionally and socially evaluate haste, delay, opportunity, patience, and the passing of life. Bally's approach is valuable because it prevents the researcher from reducing phraseological units to mechanical lexical structures; instead, it draws attention to the affective and stylistic energy of idioms. Kunin's position, developed within a more systematic phraseological tradition, gives stronger priority to structural stability, semantic integrity, reproducibility, and classification. For Kunin, phraseological units must be analyzed as special linguistic formations whose meaning and form are organized according to specific phraseological laws. From this point of view, the study of temporal phraseology requires

strict differentiation between idioms, phraseological combinations, proverbs, clichés, and free word groups. Kunin's approach is especially useful in comparative research because it allows the researcher to define what exactly is being compared: complete idiomatic units, semi-fixed expressions, metaphorical collocations, or proverbial sentences.

The polemic between Bally and Kunin is therefore not a contradiction that must be solved by choosing one side; it is a productive methodological tension. Bally helps to reveal the expressive, cultural, and emotional value of time-related phraseological units, while Kunin helps to establish their linguistic status, structural limits, and classification criteria. In the context of English and Uzbek comparison, both perspectives are necessary. Without Bally, the analysis may lose the cultural and emotional depth of expressions that encode patience, urgency, or life wisdom. Without Kunin, the analysis may become too broad and include any metaphorical expression without determining its phraseological stability. Thus, the theoretical study of phraseological units denoting time should synthesize expressive-stylistic and structural-semantic approaches. Such synthesis makes it possible to understand temporal phraseology as a linguistic system that is at once stable and dynamic, formal and cultural, reproducible and context-sensitive.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the theoretical study of phraseological units denoting time in English and Uzbek demonstrates that time is one of the most productive semantic domains in phraseology because it connects language with cognition, culture, morality, and social practice. The comparison of the two languages shows that temporal phraseological units express both universal human experiences and nationally specific interpretations. English phraseology often conceptualizes time through resource, movement, productivity, punctuality, and personal responsibility, whereas Uzbek phraseology frequently relates time to wisdom, patience, destiny, opportunity, social

appropriateness, and moral judgment. This distinction does not create an absolute opposition, because both languages contain

diverse models of temporal experience, but it helps to identify the dominant cultural tendencies reflected in idiomatic speech.

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