



ANALYSIS OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS REPRESENTING TIME SEGMENTS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Abstract

This article presents a comparative linguistic analysis of phraseological units (PUs) that denote time segments in the English and Uzbek languages. Time is a universal category, yet its linguistic manifestation is deeply rooted in the cultural and historical consciousness of a nation. By examining the semantic, structural, and cultural characteristics of temporal idioms, this study identifies both universal cognitive patterns and language-specific nuances. The findings suggest that while English PUs often reflect a linear-economic view of time, Uzbek PUs are frequently tied to agricultural cycles and traditional lifestyles.

Keywords: Phraseological units, temporal segments, English language, Uzbek language, comparative linguistics, cultural linguistics, idioms.

Introduction

One of the most fundamental yet abstract ideas in human thought is time. In linguistics, time is a concept that is conveyed by phraseology rather than just a grammatical category (tense). A linguistic community's worldview is reflected in phraseological units (PUs), which are stable word combinations having partially or entirely metaphorical meanings.

This study aims to examine how Uzbek and English speakers use fixed terms to conceptualise time segments (moments, hours, days, and seasons). Human experience frequently results in "interlinguistic equivalents," despite the geographical and genetic difference between these languages, however cultural "lacunae" (gaps) are nevertheless common.



Methods

The research utilizes a descriptive and comparative-typological method. Data was collected from authoritative phraseological dictionaries of English (e.g., Oxford, Cambridge) and Uzbek (e.g., Sh. Rahmatullayev).

- To classify units according to the time period they correspond to use semantic analysis.
- To explain the historical or social origins of specific idioms, use cultural interpretation.
- To find parallels and divergences in metaphorical mapping, use contrastive analysis.

Analyses

A breakdown of the specific linguistic layers and cultural nuances that distinguish English and Uzbek temporal phraseology:

1. The “Time as a resource” and “Time as an opportunity” contrast. In English phraseology, the Industrial Revolution and the rise of capitalism cemented the “Time is money” conceptual metaphor. This leads to a heavy concentration of PUs involving banking and commerce terms. In English, to save time, to waste time, to invest time, to live on borrowed time, time is viewed as a finite, linear substance that can be quantified and traded. In Uzbek, while the resource metaphor exists in modern usage, the traditional layer leans toward “Time as a Blessing” (Vaqt – g‘animat), Vaqting ketdi – baxting ketdi (Your time is gone, your happiness/fortune is gone). Here, time is linked to Baraka (divine blessing) and fate rather than just a bankable commodity.
2. Somatic phraseology (Body-based time). Both languages use body parts to measure time, but the imagery varies based on physical action. In English (Hand/Finger focus) at the turn of a hand (obsolete, but replaced by in a finger-snap); to have time on one’s hands. In Uzbek (Eye/Eyelid focus) qosh bilan ko‘z orasida (Between the eyebrow and the eye). This emphasizes the extreme proximity and speed of an event, which is more visually poetic than the English in a split second.
3. Quantitative measurement discrepancies the “segments” used to describe duration often reflect the historical environment:
 - ✓ The Meal-time segment: In English, in a New York minute (urban speed). In Uzbek: Choy qaynaguncha (In the time it takes for tea to boil). This is a culturally



specific segment of roughly 10–15 minutes used commonly in rural and traditional discourse.

✓ The “Distance-time” segment: In Uzbek, *Bir chaqirim yo‘l* (The time it takes to walk one chaqirim). In English, *A stone’s throw* (Though usually spatial, it is often used to describe a very short journey/time).

4. Semantic shifts – the concept of “Never”: When representing an infinite time segment (i.e., it will never happen), the two languages use different cultural impossibilities. In English: *When pigs fly or in a month of Sundays*. In Uzbek, *Tuyaning dumi yerga tekkanda* (When the camel’s tail touches the ground) or *Eshak pol gilami bo‘lganda* (When the donkey becomes a floor-mat). Uzbek often uses animal biology (the short tail of a camel) to symbolize the impossible, whereas English tends toward the whimsical (flying pigs).

Results

The analysis reveals that both languages categorize time segments into three primary groups: point in time (the moment), duration, and cyclicity.

1. The concept of “the moment” - in both languages, shortness is often compared to physiological actions. In English *in the blink of an eye, in a heartbeat*, in Uzbek *ko‘z ochib yumguncha* (In the time it takes to open and close an eye), *Bir zumda*.

2. The concept of “wait and patience”: Uzbek phraseology is rich in temporal segments related to social or religious patience, whereas English often focuses on the physical movement of time. For example:

✓ English: *To kill time, Time flies*.

✓ Uzbek: *Sariq chaqalik sabr* (Patience worth a yellow penny), *Arpa bo‘yi vaqt* (Time the length of a barley grain).

3. Agricultural and natural cycles: Uzbek PUs exhibit a strong connection to the lunar calendar and agricultural life, while English PUs are increasingly influenced by industrial or nautical history. In English: *In the doldrums, Once in a blue moon*. In Uzbek: *Hut kirdi, hut kirdi – amallab qut kirdi* (Reflecting the transition of the zodiacal month “Hut” or Pisces).

Category	English example	Uzbek example
Speed	At the eleventh hour	Qosh bilan ko‘z orasida
Indefiniteness	When pigs fly	Tuyaning dumi yerga tekkanda
Early morning	At the crack of dawn	Sahar mardondan

Table 1



Discussion

The comparative analysis highlights several key findings:

- ❖ Linear and cyclical perception: English idioms often treat time as a commodity (Time is money, to spend time), reflecting the Western linear-economic model. Uzbek idioms, while adopting modern nuances, retain a cyclical and communal character (Vaqt gʻanimat – Time is a gift/fleeting opportunity).
- ❖ Animal metaphors: Both languages use animals to mark time, but the species differ based on geography. English uses donkey’s years for a long time, while Uzbek may use “tuyaning dumi yerga tekkanda” (when the camel’s tail touches the ground) for “never.”
- ❖ Syntactic structure: English PUs are often verb-based, whereas Uzbek PUs frequently utilize imagery involving somatic (body) parts or natural phenomena.

The similarity in momentary expressions (blink of an eye) suggests a universal human biological perception of speed that transcends culture. However, the conceptualization of “long periods” is where cultural divergence is most prominent.

Conclusion

The analysis of phraseological units representing time segments in English and Uzbek demonstrates that language is a repository of cultural history. While universal human experiences lead to some metaphorical overlaps, the specific imagery used – whether nautical/industrial in English or agricultural/nomadic in Uzbek – sets them apart. Understanding these nuances is crucial for translators and linguists to ensure that the “spirit” of time is accurately conveyed across cultures.

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