Philology Matters / ISSN: 1994 – 4233 / E-ISSN: 2181–1237
Uzbekistan State World Languages University
2026 Vol. 1 No. M 4
LINGUISTICS
DOI: 10.36078/987656199

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LINGUOPRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF TIME-EXPRESSING PHRASEMES IN ENGLISH, RUSSIAN AND UZBEK

Abstract. This article examines the linguopragmatic potential of time-expressing phrasemes in English, Russian and Uzbek. Its purpose is to distinguish shared figurative models from differences in semantic scope, idiomatic status and likely communicative functions. The study uses a qualitative contrastive design based on twelve illustrative expressions arranged in four groups: time as a valuable resource, the passage of time, last-moment timing and patience. The material is a purposively selected working set rather than a representative corpus; therefore, the analysis does not claim to measure national frequency or actual speaker behaviour. Semantic comparison, conceptual-metaphor analysis and pragmatic interpretation are applied consecutively, with particular attention to partial rather than automatic equivalence. The comparison identifies recurring evaluative, expressive and advisory possibilities but also shows that superficially corresponding forms can communicate different temporal relations. For example, an expression denoting the final permissible moment is not fully equivalent to one indicating merely timely arrival. The article concludes that reliable cross-linguistic interpretation requires separate assessment of conceptual similarity, conventional form and context-sensitive function. The findings offer a transparent analytical framework for phraseology research, translation and language teaching.

Keywords: linguopragmatics, temporal phrasemes, comparative phraseology, time metaphor, pragmatic functions, phraseological equivalence, English-Russian-Uzbek comparison, semantic analysis.

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INGLIZ, RUS VA O‘ZBEK TILLARIDA VAQTNI IFODALOVCHI FRAZEMALARNING LINGVOPRAGMATIK TAHLILI

Annotatsiya. Maqolada ingliz, rus va o‘zbek tillarida vaqt ma’nosini ifodalovchi frazemalarning lingvopragmatik imkoniyatlari o‘rganiladi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi umumiy obrazli modellarni semantik qamrov, frazeologik maqom va kommunikativ vazifalardagi farqlardan ajratib ko‘rsatishdir. Qiyosiy-sifat tahlili uchun vaqtning qadri, vaqtning o‘tishi, so‘nggi lahzada ulgurish hamda sabr va vaqt tartibini anglatuvchi to‘rtta guruhga birlashtirilgan o‘n ikkita ifoda tanlangan. Material reprezentativ korpus emas, balki maqsadli shakllantirilgan ko‘rgazmali namunalardan

iborat; shu sababli tillardagi qo‘llanish chastotasi yoki so‘zlovchilarning real xatti-harakati haqida umumiy xulosa chiqarilmaydi. Tadqiqotda semantik chog‘ishtirish, konseptual metafora tahlili va pragmatik talqin usullari izchil qo‘llanadi. Natijalar vaqtga munosabatni ifodalashda baholash, hissiy ta’sir va maslahat berish imkoniyatlari mavjudligini, biroq tashqi jihatdan o‘xshash ifodalar har doim bir xil kommunikativ mazmunni bildirmasligini ko‘rsatadi. Xususan, oxirgi imkoniyat lahzasini anglatuvchi birlik o‘z vaqtida kelishni bildiruvchi ifoda bilan to‘liq ekvivalent emas. Xulosa sifatida tillararo talqinda konseptual yaqinlik, turg‘unlik darajasi va kontekstual funksiyani alohida baholash zarurligi asoslanadi. Natijalardan frazeologik tadqiqot, tarjima va til o‘qitish jarayonida foydalanish mumkin.

Kalit so‘zlar: lingvopragmatika; temporal frazemalar; qiyosiy frazeologiya; vaqt metaforasi; pragmatik funksiyalar; frazeologik ekvivalentlik; uch til chog‘ishtirmasi; semantik tahlil.

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ЛИНГВОПРАГМАТИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ ФРАЗЕМ СО ЗНАЧЕНИЕМ ВРЕМЕНИ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ, РУССКОМ И УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается лингвопрагматический потенциал фразем со значением времени в английском, русском и узбекском языках. Цель исследования состоит в разграничении общих образных моделей и различий в семантическом объёме, фразеологическом статусе и возможных коммуникативных функциях. Для качественного сопоставительного анализа отобраны двенадцать иллюстративных выражений, объединённых в четыре группы: ценность времени, течение времени, своевременность в последний момент, терпение и временной порядок. Материал представляет собой целевую подборку примеров, а не репрезентативный корпус; поэтому выводы не распространяются на частотность употребления или реальное речевое поведение носителей языков. Последовательно применяются семантическое сопоставление, анализ концептуальных метафор и прагматическая интерпретация. Установлено, что исследуемые выражения обладают оценочным, экспрессивным и рекомендательным потенциалом, однако внешне сходные конструкции могут различаться по содержанию и условиям употребления. В частности, выражение, обозначающее действие в последний допустимый момент, не является полным эквивалентом выражения, обозначающего лишь прибытие вовремя. Сделан вывод о необходимости раздельного учёта концептуального сходства, устойчивости формы и контекстно обусловленной функции при межъязыковом сопоставлении. Полученные результаты могут использоваться в исследованиях фразеологии, практике перевода и преподавании иностранных языков.

Ключевые слова: лингвопрагматика; темпоральные фраземы; сопоставительная фразеология; метафора времени; прагматические функции; фразеологическая эквивалентность; сопоставление трёх языков; семантический анализ.

INTRODUCTION

Time belongs to the most frequently conceptualized dimensions of human experience. Speakers refer to it when they schedule actions, recall events, assess opportunities or advise others. Such meanings are often expressed by relatively stable multiword combinations whose interpretation exceeds the immediate reference of the word time. The relationship between a conventional expression and its communicative use is consequently important for comparative phraseology. An expression may name a temporal sit-

uation, yet in an utterance it may also praise punctuality, convey regret, encourage patience or warn against delay. These additional effects are not fixed properties of an isolated word; they depend on the utterance, the interlocutors and the circumstances in which it is used.

The cognitive approach offers one explanation for recurring temporal images. Conceptual metaphor treats abstract experience as partly organized through more accessible domains, including movement and the value of resources [Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; p. 7]. Experiments on temporal language and cognition have examined the role of spatial representations in understanding time [Boroditsky, 2000; pp. 8-9]. It would nevertheless be inaccurate to assume that every temporal expression in every language realizes an identical metaphor. Research on the Aymara system and on an Amazonian language has demonstrated that the organization of temporal meaning may depend on specific linguistic and cultural practices [Sweetser, 2006, p. 420].

Phraseological meaning poses an additional difficulty. A fixed idiom, a familiar proverb, a conventional metaphor and a free descriptive combination may refer to the same situation without belonging to one linguistic class [Gaybullaeva, 2026; p. 88]. Experimental work on idioms suggests that conventional figurative meanings can be motivated by systematic imagery and conceptual connections [O'Brien, 1990; p. 40]. Nevertheless, a semantic resemblance does not establish full phraseological equivalence. It is necessary to examine lexical stability, compositionality, conventional status and the range of possible communicative functions before calling two multilingual examples counterparts.

From a pragmatic perspective, the force of an expression cannot be read directly from its lexical form. The same statement about time may function as advice, reproach, reassurance or an explanation when it is uttered in different contexts. The distinction between an utterance's conventional meaning and an inference about the speaker's intention is compatible with the pragmatic account of conversational implicature [Grice, 1975; p. 41]. For this reason, the present analysis discusses possible contextual effects rather than attributing fixed intentions to English, Russian or Uzbek speakers as national groups. Its focus is on how temporal wording makes particular communicative interpretations available.

Recent studies also support careful cross-linguistic comparison. A comparison of Russian, English and French phraseological units with time components likewise reports common features together with language-specific semantic realizations [Zalipaeva et al., 2022; p. 102]. These findings are relevant but do not determine the results for English, Russian and Uzbek. In particular, the pragmatic distinction between saying that time is valuable and advising someone not to miss a final opportunity requires more precise attention to the meanings of individual expressions.

The purpose of this article is therefore to compare a small set of time-expressing phrasemes and related conventional formulations in English, Russian and Uzbek. Three questions guide the analysis: which semantic images recur across the selected expressions; where does the apparent equivalence become partial or misleading; and which evaluative, expressive or advisory functions can reasonably be proposed for their use in context? The central argument is that shared temporal concepts do not guarantee identical linguistic form, degree of idiomaticity or pragmatic force. The article develops this argument through an explicitly limited qualitative sample rather than a frequency-based generalization.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopts a qualitative, contrastive and interpretive design. Its material consists of twelve expressions in three languages, grouped as four analytical sets. The examples were retained from the preliminary working material on which the present article is based; they were not extracted by a reproducible query from a published corpus. The four sets concern (1) time as a valuable resource, (2) the perceived movement or rapid passage of time, (3) action near a critical deadline, and (4) patience and the appropriate moment for an event. Table 1 reproduces the compared forms. The sample is purposive and illustrative: it is intended to reveal interpretive differences, not to represent the phraseological inventory of any of the languages.

The unit of analysis is a conventional or potentially conventional multiword expression referring to temporal experience. Selection was

based on an explicit temporal meaning and the possibility of arranging items into a shared conceptual group. The label phraseme is used here as an umbrella term for purposes of comparison; it does not imply that every listed item has been independently established as a fixed idiom. Proverbs and less-idiomatic expressions are identified where this distinction affects the interpretation. The Uzbek and Russian examples are treated as functional comparison candidates, not as automatically interchangeable dictionary equivalents of the English items.

Analysis proceeded in four stages. First, the literal or compositional temporal reference of each form was described. Second, its image or conceptual motivation was identified, such as time as a valued possession, time as a moving entity or time as a condition for successful action. Third, the semantic scope of the three candidates in each set was compared, particularly whether they expressed duration, punctuality, proximity to a deadline, or an appropriate sequence of events. Fourth, the likely pragmatic affordances were interpreted: an expression may invite evaluation, communicate emotion, reinforce a recommendation or frame an event positively or negatively. These are analytic possibilities, not experimentally verified speech acts.

The study applies a conservative equivalence criterion. Full equivalence would require substantial convergence in conventional meaning, structural status and usable context; conceptual correspondence alone is classified as partial. Existing research on contextual metaphor supports the importance of this distinction [Kövecses, 2015; p. 189]. Because no authentic dialogue corpus, speaker interviews or dictionary-entry audit accompanies the supplied working set, pragmatic interpretations are presented as hypotheses about potential use. Neither distributional frequency nor a claim about the overall cultural character of a language community can be inferred from the present material.

RESULTS

The first group construes time as something valuable. The English statement *time is money* establishes a direct relationship between temporal resources and economic value; the Russian *время дорого* emphasizes the high value or costliness of time, while the Uzbek *vaqt oltindan qimmat* intensifies the evaluation through comparison with gold. The shared conceptual orientation is clear: time deserves protection and should not be wasted. Their linguistic realizations are not identical, however. The English formula supplies an economic identity metaphor, the Russian wording offers a direct evaluative predicate, and the Uzbek saying relies on an explicit comparative standard. In a particular conversation, any of the expressions could support an exhortation to act efficiently, but that persuasive function depends on context. This analysis establishes a common evaluative potential, not a measured national preference for productivity.

The second group expresses the perceived passage of time: *time flies, время летит* and *vaqt uchib o'tadi*. All three associate rapid temporal progression with movement through space. The image is especially transparent because the verb of flight supplies a recognizable source domain. At the conceptual level, the counterparts are close, and in appropriate contexts they can give an expressive interpretation to a short period experienced as unexpectedly brief. Nevertheless, the analysis should not treat expressive effect as automatic. A statement that time flies during a celebration may express pleasure or nostalgia; spoken in response to a looming deadline, a comparable form could signal anxiety. Its pragmatic value emerges from the surrounding event and from the stance of the speaker, not from the temporal metaphor alone.

The third set exposes a limitation of surface matching. In the nick of time denotes arrival or completion at the final point before it would be too late. Russian в *последний момент* specifies the last moment but, without additional verbal context, does not itself assert successful completion. Uzbek *vaqtida yetib kelmoq* refers to arriving on time; it can describe punctual arrival without implying the immediately preceding danger of missing a deadline. Consequently, all three forms concern timing, yet they differ in whether the urgency, near-failure and successful outcome are encoded. This is a case of partial functional correspondence rather than phraseological equivalence. A translator preserving the English meaning would need to convey the final-opportunity component explicitly when the target-language phrase does not carry it.

The fourth group concerns patience and temporal order. English *good things take time* presents duration as a condition of worthwhile results. Russian *всему своё время* and Uzbek *har narsaning o‘z vaqti bor* communicate that events have an appropriate moment. These expressions can all be used to discourage haste or reassure an impatient interlocutor. Yet the explanatory structures differ: the English saying stresses the time required to achieve something, while the Russian and Uzbek formulations place greater emphasis on proper sequence or timing. Their pragmatic proximity arises from a possible advising function, not from identity of lexical meaning. The English formulation also has a proverbial character; the distinction between proverb and idiom matters because proverbs can operate as complete, generalizing utterances.

Taken together, the four sets show two contrasting patterns. The expressions referring to the movement of time display relatively close figurative alignment, whereas the groups associated with punctuality and patience reveal substantial differences in semantic entailment. Time-as-value formulations share an evaluative orientation but employ different image structures. This contrast supports a three-level comparison: a common conceptual topic, the narrower lexical or phraseological meaning, and a context-dependent pragmatic effect. Table 1 summarizes the language forms; the qualifications discussed above must accompany the table if it is used for translation or teaching.

Table 1.

Contrastive grouping of time-expressing forms in English, Russian and Uzbek

Concept	English	Russian	Uzbek
Time as a valued resource	Time is money	Время дорого	Vaqt oltindan qimmat
Perceived passage of time	Time flies	Время летит	Vaqt uchib o‘tadi
Last-moment / timely action	In the nick of time	В последний момент	Vaqtida yetib kelmoq
Patience and temporal order	Good things take time	Всему своё время	Har narsaning o‘z vaqti bor

DISCUSSION

The observed similarities are compatible with the idea that temporal expressions often draw on recognizable experiential domains. The movement of time and the value of time can be represented metaphorically, as argued in foundational accounts of conceptual metaphor [Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; p. 9]. The analysis nevertheless supports a restricted conclusion, the selected formulations display related images, not a universal or statistically dominant pattern. This distinction matters because broader cross-linguistic research has shown that the conceptualization of time is open to substantial variation [Sinha et al., 2011; p. 140]. Shared imagery can coexist with differences in conventional lexical encoding and communicative practice.

A second implication concerns pragmatic interpretation. An idiom or proverb does not possess a single speech act independent of its use. Even a strongly evaluative wording such as time is money may act as self-motivation, institutional advice or criticism of another person’s delay. A maxim about patience may be reassuring in one exchange but dismissive in another. The interpretations proposed in this article should therefore be understood as context-sensitive affordances. Conversational inferences require information about the interlocutors’ goals and common ground [Grice, 1975; p. 46]. The interdependence of conceptual meaning and context is also emphasized in more recent discussions of metaphor [Kövecses, 2015; p. 197].

The third implication relates to equivalence and the classification of material. In the nick of time includes a final-chance reading that its Uzbek comparison candidate does not guarantee. Moreover, time is money and good things take time are maxim-like complete clauses, whereas в последний момент is a circumstantial expres-

sion and vaqtida yetib kelmoq is a verb phrase. Assigning them all the same idiomatic label would conceal important differences of structure and conventionality. The more useful practice is to identify the category of each form before conducting a pragmatic comparison. Research on the motivated character of figurative meaning provides a rationale for this more fine-grained treatment [Gibbs, 1992; p. 487].

This distinction has practical relevance for translation. A translator should first isolate the semantic components that the source sentence presupposes or entails. The next task is to select a target expression that maintains the communicative purpose without creating a false implication. When an idiomatic equivalent is unavailable, an explanatory phrase can be preferable to an elegant but misleading proverb. In language teaching, the four groups may be used to ask students why two seemingly similar expressions do not always suit the same situation. Such an exercise connects vocabulary development with pragmatic appropriateness rather than presenting multilingual expressions as mechanically replaceable units.

The comparison also helps situate this small study in relation to newer scholarship. Work on temporal cognition in English and Mandarin illustrates that cognitive patterns are neither uniform across languages nor reducible to a single contrast [Yang et al., 2022]. Research explicitly comparing Russian, English and French time-related phraseology reports both common semantic areas and distinctive linguistic realizations. The present three-language material addresses a different combination and shifts attention to pragmatic compatibility; it cannot, however, confirm cross-cultural differences in usage rates, cognitive preferences or national attitudes. Such claims would require independently sourced expressions, naturalistic contexts and a larger sampling frame.

The limitations are therefore substantive. Only four conceptual groups and twelve expressions were examined; the list was assembled illustratively rather than drawn from comparable dictionaries or corpora. The initial working material supplies no independently checkable frequency counts, speaker evaluations or discourse examples. Consequently, some items should be reclassified after dictionary validation, and the proposed pragmatic functions should be tested on authentic English, Russian and Uzbek utterances. A subsequent study could document source dictionaries, select balanced genre-specific corpora, apply explicit idiomaticity criteria and compare the same interactional environments across languages. These steps would allow the present interpretive observations to be assessed empirically instead of being extended beyond the evidence.

CONCLUSION

This contrastive analysis addressed three questions concerning recurrent temporal images, limits of equivalence and pragmatic functions. The four illustrative groups reveal recurring concepts of time as a resource, a moving entity, a critical point for action and a condition of appropriate development. These similarities are relevant to cross-linguistic interpretation, but they do not justify treating all compared expressions as complete lexical or phraseological equivalents.

The most important difference occurs in expressions of timing: in the nick of time specifies a last-moment achievement, whereas the Russian and Uzbek candidates considered here do not necessarily encode the same combination of urgency and successful outcome. Proverbs about patience likewise differ in whether they foreground the duration of effort or the appropriateness of a moment. Evaluative, expressive and advisory functions may follow from these meanings, but their realization depends on the communicative context.

The study therefore recommends analysing temporal expressions on three separate levels: conceptual motivation, conventional semantic structure and contextual pragmatic function. Its contribution is an explicitly delimited comparison rather than a claim about national frequencies or stable cultural traits. Enlarged corpus-based and contextually documented research is required to test these findings. For translation and classroom practice, careful attention to partial equivalence can reduce misleading substitutions and improve the interpretation of temporal phraseology.

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