

CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF THE LINGUOCULTURAL UNIT “TIME” IN ENGLISH CORPORA

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Annotation: This article explores the concept of time within English linguistic corpora from a cognitive, cultural, and linguo-philosophical perspective. Drawing on the theoretical framework of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, the study examines how time is conceptualized through cognitive metaphors and represented across different linguistic and cultural domains.

Key words: Time concept, cognitive metaphor, linguoculture, conceptualization, frame analysis, English language, cultural worldview, time perception, cross-cultural communication, linguistic worldview, cognitive linguistics, time as a resource, time as money, temporal frameworks, intercultural differences

Introduction

The research highlights that time is not only a universal category but also a culturally conditioned concept shaped by the values, beliefs, and experiences of specific ethnolinguistic communities. Special attention is given to English linguoculture, where time is frequently associated with domains such as money, resource, and movement. When conducting research on the concept of time in English corpora, it becomes evident that the understanding of time as a conceptual phenomenon has long attracted the attention of scholars and linguists worldwide. Perspectives on time have been evaluated not only from a philosophical standpoint but also from a linguistic one, leading to diverse interpretations. In particular, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson approach the concept of time through the lens of cognitive metaphor theory.

Methods

The conceptual nature of time has been acknowledged in numerous scholarly studies. Time is regarded as a phenomenon that the human organism adapts to; it is the product of conscious, experience-based processes and perceptions, functioning within a certain order and unfolding in accordance with the natural environment. From this perspective, it becomes clear that this process operates in close connection with the cultural characteristics of one's native language. The conceptualization of “time” thus reflects each ethnos's perception and attitude toward it. In addition to possessing national and cultural features, time is also considered a universal linguo-philosophical category. Analyzing the concept of time from a linguistic perspective requires the application of modern approaches. Therefore, issues such as the linguistic worldview, the role of humans in language studies, the relationship between language and cognition, the cross-linguistic comparison of concepts, and attention to national-cultural features are of great importance.

It should be emphasized that attitudes toward time are shaped by national and cultural characteristics. The environment, nature, mentality, and religious beliefs of each ethnos contribute to the formation of unique perceptions of time. These perspectives are grounded in centuries of accumulated experience and become especially apparent in comparative analyses of different linguocultures. For instance, in English culture, the concept of time is often expressed within the domain of money. Wasting time is equated with wasting money, whereas using time efficiently is associated with saving money. This suggests that two distinct domains “time” and “money”—merge into a unified conceptual domain through cognitive mapping, resulting in specific metaphors in the English language.

Additionally, time is sometimes described as an “enemy,” portrayed as the thief of invaluable aspects of human life such as youth and beauty. This reflects a cultural tendency shaped by the desire for eternal youth and attractiveness, giving rise to a negative perception of time.

Results

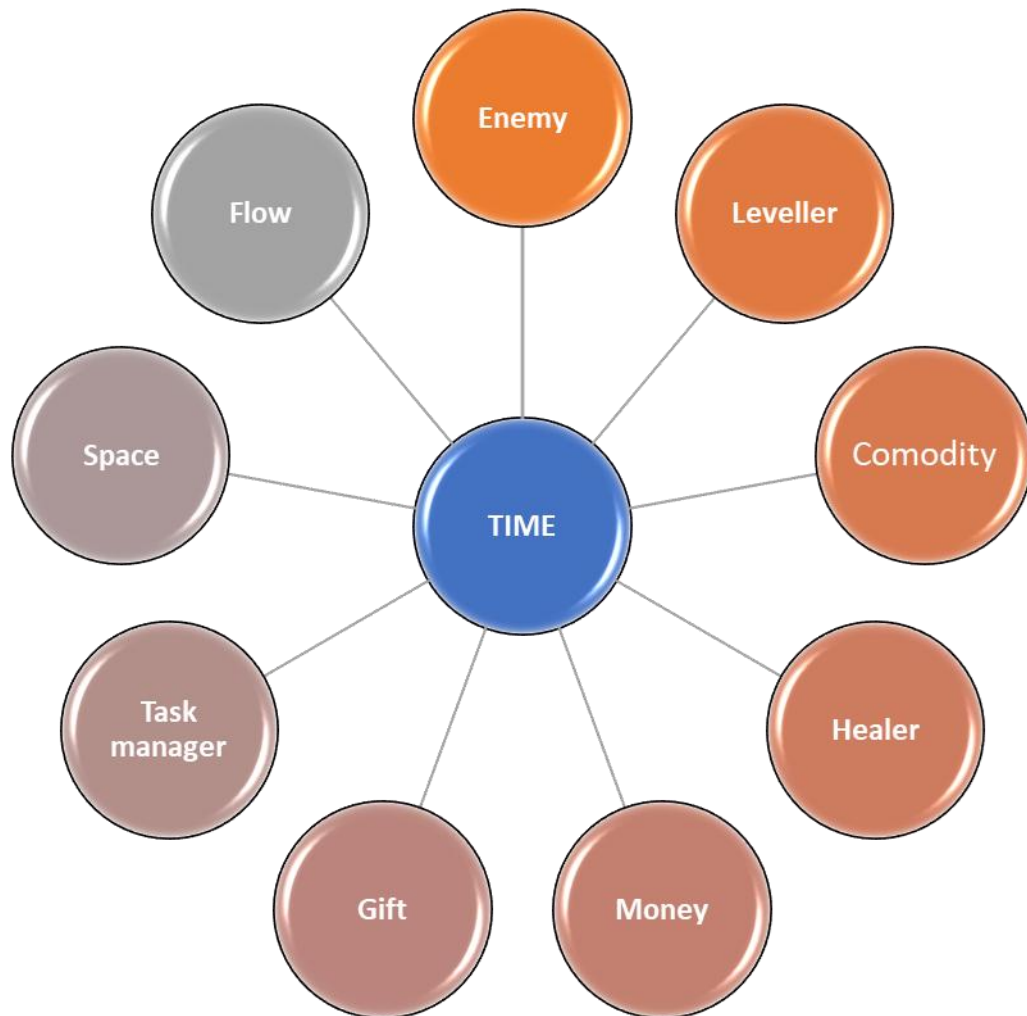
At the same time, English corpora reveal that time is also referred to as a “great healer.” This reflects the ethical and aesthetic values of English culture, where people tend to believe that difficulties and emotional distress will diminish over time. Similarly, time is described as “a great leveller,” emphasizing that every individual is granted an equal amount of time—twenty-four hours per day—regardless of status or achievement. This pragmatic outlook leads to the perception of time as a “valuable commodity.”

Time is an essential element of society and culture. Comparative analysis of different cultures shows that attitudes toward time vary significantly. The renowned psychologist Robert Levine observed that economically developed countries such as United States, Germany, and Japan operate at a faster pace due to their high valuation of time, often expressed in the phrase “time is money.” In contrast, less economically developed regions tend to exhibit a slower pace of life. Cultures in the Middle East, Latin America, and Eastern Europe adopt a more flexible attitude toward time, prioritizing social and family relationships. However, these distinctions are not always absolute. For example, despite valuing punctuality, Japanese culture also emphasizes social harmony. Thus, attitudes toward time are influenced by cultural traditions, beliefs, and socio-economic conditions. Western cultures (including parts of East Asia such as Japan) tend to measure time using clocks, with clearly defined beginnings and endings for activities. In contrast, Eastern cultures often relate time to events or individuals rather than strict schedules. As a result, differing perceptions of time may lead to misunderstandings in intercultural communication.

Studying the concept of time through various sources, particularly linguistic corpora, helps foster mutual understanding among people. Corpora provide extensive opportunities for researchers, revealing that time is often perceived as a rapidly diminishing resource.

This is reflected in the works of notable figures such as Alice Walker, who stated, “Time moves slowly but passes quickly,” and Jean de La Bruyère, who noted that those who misuse time complain most about its brevity. Marty Rubin emphasized both the importance of using time effectively and letting it go, while Paracelsus described time as a dynamic force bringing constant change. Other thinkers, including Pope John Paul II, Charles Caleb Colton, Khalil Gibran, and Bill Keane, encourage individuals to focus on the present rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. These perspectives contribute to a more positive and balanced understanding of time within English linguoculture. One of the key objectives of this research is the frame analysis of the concept of time in English linguoculture. Based on corpus analysis, it can be concluded that the concept of “time” is represented through rich, multi-layered, and multi-domain frames.

One of the most important objectives of our research is the frame analysis of the concept of time in English linguoculturology. In this section, based on the results of our investigations conducted in English corpora, we have come to the conclusion that the concept of “time” is represented in English linguoculture through rich, multi-layered, and multi-domain frames, and we have illustrated this in the table below:



Conclusion

In conclusion, the English language employs several major conceptual frameworks to describe time. Time is not only a mathematical or physical entity but also a cultural and psychological phenomenon. It is often conceptualized as a moving object (“time flies”), a measurable quantity (“hours,” “minutes,” “seconds”), and a valuable resource.

The study demonstrates that time in English linguoculture is closely linked to cultural values, particularly efficiency, organization, and appreciation. While time is a universal concept, each culture interprets it differently. In English-speaking contexts, time is often associated with value, productivity, and management.

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