

SIGNIFICANCE OF TIME TERMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Annotation: *This article analyzes the concept of time in linguistics from grammatical, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic perspectives. The role of time-related terms in expressing the sequence of events, ensuring the logical coherence of a text, and organizing communication within the language system is discussed. The study also explains how time expressions convey different meanings depending on context and communicative conditions.*

Keywords: *concept of time, time-related terms, grammatical tense, semantic analysis, pragmatic approach, cognitive linguistics, text structure.*

In linguistics, the concept of time is considered not only as a grammatical unit but also as an important object of analysis from semantic, pragmatic, discursive, cognitive, and cultural perspectives. Time-related terms function as essential tools within different layers of language for creating information, organizing communication, and developing both personal and social identity.

From a grammatical perspective, time is one of the fundamental categories in linguistics. This system uses verb forms to determine the sequence in which events occur over time. Each language possesses its own grammatical mechanisms—such as verb tenses, auxiliary verbs, and aspectual forms—that indicate when an event occurred, whether it is ongoing, completed, or expected to occur in the future. For example, the past tense indicates that an event has already taken place. The present tense expresses an action occurring at the moment of speaking, while the future tense refers to events that have not yet happened. These grammatical units form the structural basis of language and ensure clarity in communication.

The linguist Noam Chomsky, in his theory of Universal Grammar, considers time as a common element embedded within syntactic structures. According to this view, all languages possess a system of tense, reflecting a universal model for expressing human thought through language. In Chomsky's perspective, time is grammatically encoded, and this encoding is based on the innate linguistic capacity of humans.



Moreover, grammatical tenses do not only indicate the temporal location of events but also convey their meanings. For instance, the English Present Perfect tense not only indicates that an event occurred in the past but also emphasizes its relevance to the present moment. This illustrates the semantic dimension of grammatical tense and highlights the importance of viewing tense not merely as a formal grammatical category but also as a mechanism for constructing meaning.

Grammatical tenses also play a crucial role in language learning. Learners who understand and use tense systems correctly can achieve greater clarity, coherence, and comprehension in communication. Therefore, tense systems require particular attention in language teaching methodology. According to the “comprehensible input” theory proposed by Stephen Krashen, learners should be exposed to language material that is slightly above their current level but still understandable. Within this process, the concept of grammatical tense becomes an essential component.

From a syntactic perspective, time-related expressions are important elements that preserve the structural organization and logical coherence of language. They determine sentence structure, strengthen semantic relations between events, and contribute to the internal logical structure of a text. For example, temporal connectors such as “before,” “after,” “at that time,” “then,” and “simultaneously” establish relationships between sentences, indicate the order of events, and ensure the logical progression of discourse.

In this respect, temporal units in syntax perform not only a grammatical function but also play a significant role in text linguistics and communication. The linguist Teun A. van Dijk considers time as a structural element of text that regulates the flow of events, expresses causal relations, and maintains logical coherence. According to him, temporal constructions shape the semantic structure of a text and help readers correctly interpret the development of events. This approach allows syntax to be viewed not only as a grammatical structure but also as a system that forms the logical foundation of discourse.

The linguist George Lakoff, within his theory of cognitive semantics, studies time as a metaphorical structure. According to Lakoff, time is deeply embedded in the semantic system of language and is conceptualized through metaphors such as “moving object,” “path,” or “flow.” From this perspective, semantic units related to time demonstrate how human



thought is expressed through language. For example, expressions such as “time is passing quickly” or “there is much time ahead” conceptualize time as a spatial and moving entity. This allows time to be analyzed as a cognitive structure in semantic studies.

In conclusion, from a semantic perspective, time-related terms occupy an important position in the meaning-making system of language. They reveal meaningful relationships between events, express causality, define contextual meaning in texts, and reflect the ways in which human thoughts are expressed through language. This demonstrates the necessity of studying the concept of time in detail from a semantic perspective.

In linguistics, therefore, time can be analyzed not only as a grammatical unit but also as a mechanism for creating meaning. The pragmatic approach studies time in relation to the social and communicative aspects of language. According to this perspective, time expressions are interpreted not only grammatically or semantically but also according to the speech situation, the speaker's intention, the social roles of participants in communication, and other contextual factors.

The pragmatic expression of time plays a crucial role in ensuring clarity, relevance, and comprehensibility in communication. For example, the expression “soon” may indicate a relatively specific time frame in formal discourse—such as within a few days or within a defined deadline. However, in informal conversation, this expression may have a subjective meaning, ranging from a few minutes to several weeks. From a pragmatic perspective, this illustrates that the meaning of time expressions depends on context, the speaker's intention, and the expectations of the listener.

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