

THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF LINGUISTIC AND TEMPORAL CONCEPTS IN ENGLISH AND KARAKALPAK LANGUAGES

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Abstract. *In contemporary cognitive linguistics, the concept is regarded as a key mental construct mediating between language, cognition, and culture. This article explores the theoretical distinction between linguistic concepts and temporal concepts, emphasizing their different ontological status and modes of linguistic realization. The nucleus–periphery model is applied to reveal the internal structure of the temporal concept and its universal and culture-specific components. Based on English and Karakalpak fairy-tale discourse, the analysis shows that temporal meanings are frequently realized symbolically through narrative formulas rather than through chronological reference. The findings highlight the necessity of distinguishing between cognitive models of time and their linguistic manifestations in order to ensure methodological precision in conceptual and discourse-oriented research.*

Keywords: *linguistic concept, temporal concept, cognitive linguistics, nucleus–periphery model, time conceptualization, discourse analysis.*

Аннотация. *В современной когнитивной лингвистике концепт рассматривается как ключевая ментальная единица, опосредующая взаимодействие языка, мышления и культуры. В статье анализируется теоретическое различие между лингвистическим и темпоральным концептами с акцентом на их онтологический статус и способы языковой репрезентации. С использованием модели «ядро – периферия» раскрывается внутренняя структура темпорального концепта и его универсальные и национально-культурные компоненты. Материал английских и каракалпакских сказок демонстрирует, что временные значения часто реализуются символически через нарративные формулы, а не посредством хронологического обозначения времени.*

Ключевые слова: *лингвистический концепт, темпоральный концепт, когнитивная лингвистика, модель ядра и периферии, концептуализация времени, дискурс.*

Annotatsiya. *Zamonaviy kognitiv tilshunoslikda konsept til, tafakkur va madaniyat o'rtasidagi o'zaro bog'liqlikni ta'minlovchi muhim mental birlik sifatida qaraladi. Ushbu maqolada lingvistik konsept va temporallik konsepti o'rtasidagi nazariy farqlar ularning ontologik maqomi va til orqali ifodalanish xususiyatlari asosida tahlil qilinadi. Yadro–periferiya modeli orqali temporallik konseptining ichki tuzilishi hamda uning universal va milliy-madaniy qatlamlari ochib beriladi. Ingliz va qoraqalpoq ertaklari materiallari vaqt tushunchasining ko'pincha xronologik emas, balki ramziy va narrativ shakllarda ifodalanishini ko'rsatadi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *lingvistik konsept, temporallik konsepti, kognitiv tilshunoslik, yadro–periferiya modeli, vaqt konseptualizatsiyasi, diskurs tahlili.*

Introduction. In modern linguistics, particularly within cognitive and linguocultural paradigms, language is no longer viewed as an autonomous system of signs but rather as a reflection of human cognition and cultural experience. Within this framework, the concept (concept) emerges as a fundamental analytical category that enables scholars to investigate how knowledge, experience, and values are structured in the human mind and encoded in language. Consequently, the distinction between different types of concepts has become an essential methodological issue.

Among these types, linguistic concepts and temporal concepts require special attention. Although both are rooted in cognition, they differ significantly in their scope, degree of verbalization, and cultural specificity. Linguistic concepts are directly mediated by language and culture, whereas temporal concepts represent broader cognitive structures related to the human perception of time. Failure to distinguish between these two categories may lead to conceptual ambiguity and methodological inconsistency, particularly in dissertation-level and comparative research. Therefore, the present study seeks to clarify the theoretical foundations of linguistic and temporal concepts and to demonstrate their functional differentiation through cognitive-linguistic analysis.

Methodology. The present study is grounded in the theoretical and methodological principles of cognitive linguistics, linguocultural studies, and functional grammar, all of which emphasize the interdependence of language, cognition, and cultural experience. Within this paradigm, language is viewed not merely as a formal system but as a means of conceptualizing and structuring human knowledge.

The methodological foundation of the research draws on the works of scholars who conceptualize concepts as mental structures shaped by human cognition and verbalized through language. According to E. S. Kubryakova, a concept represents a mental formation resulting from cognitive activity and reflected through linguistic units, which establishes the inseparable link between conceptual structures and language [10]. Similarly, V. I. Karasik interprets linguistic concepts as culturally marked mental entities formed at the intersection of language, culture, and consciousness, emphasizing their evaluative and axiological components. These views justify the selection of linguistic concepts as analyzable units only when they are verbalized in discourse [8, 97-99].

At the same time, the study relies on the theoretical distinction proposed in cognitive linguistics between linguistic concepts and universal cognitive categories. In this regard, the works of R. Langacker are particularly significant. Langacker treats time as a fundamental cognitive dimension structuring human experience, while linguistic tense and aspect are regarded as secondary means of profiling temporal relations rather than as the source of temporal meaning itself. This approach supports the interpretation of the temporal concept as a pre-linguistic cognitive construct that becomes accessible to linguistic analysis only through its partial grammatical and lexical representation [5, 284-286].

Furthermore, the methodological framework incorporates the functional-semantic approach to temporality, developed by A. V. Bondarko, who views temporal meaning as a functional-semantic field realized through tense, aspect, and temporal adverbials. This perspective allows the study to analyze temporal meanings not as isolated grammatical categories but as interconnected elements within a broader semantic system [6, 15-18].

To model the internal structure of concepts, the research applies the nucleus-periphery model, widely used in cognitive semantics. The model is theoretically supported

by Z. D. Popova and I. A. Sternin, who argue that concepts consist of a stable ядро (nucleus) containing universal cognitive features and a flexible периферия (periphery) that reflects cultural, contextual, and discursive variation [11, 34-36]. This approach is further reinforced by D. Geeraerts' prototype theory, which demonstrates that conceptual categories are not rigid but are organized around prototypical centers with gradual boundaries. In the present study, this model is employed to distinguish universal temporal meanings (sequence, duration) from culturally specific narrative realizations [3].

In addition, conceptual metaphor theory, as developed by V. Evans and M. Green, is used as an auxiliary analytical tool. Their work demonstrates that abstract concepts such as time are frequently conceptualized through spatial and motion-based schemas (e.g., time as a path, time as movement). This theoretical position is particularly relevant for analyzing fairy-tale discourse, where temporal meanings are often encoded metaphorically rather than chronologically [2].

From a discourse-oriented perspective, the study also draws on the ideas of C. Kramsch, who emphasizes that time in narrative discourse functions as a cultural and symbolic construct rather than as an objective measurement. This view provides a theoretical justification for analyzing fairy-tale temporal formulas as manifestations of mythological and culturally embedded time [4].

Methodologically, the research employs conceptual analysis as the main method, focusing on the reconstruction of mental structures through linguistic data within the "language–mind–knowledge" triad. This is supplemented by metaphorical analysis, nucleus–periphery modeling, and discourse analysis, particularly of English and Karakalpak fairy tales. The combination of these methods ensures a comprehensive examination of the temporal concept at cognitive, linguistic, and cultural levels.

Results. The results of the study demonstrate a clear functional and structural distinction between linguistic concepts and temporal concepts, while also revealing their interaction within discourse. The analysis confirms that linguistic concepts are inherently language-bound and culturally saturated, whereas temporal concepts operate as universal cognitive models that are only partially and selectively represented in language.

First, the analysis shows that linguistic concepts are systematically verbalized through multiple levels of language, including lexical units, phraseological expressions, metaphors, and discourse formulas. These concepts possess a structured internal organization consisting of a nucleus and peripheral zones. For instance, the linguistic concept Labour / Mynet reveals a stable conceptual nucleus associated with action, effort, and work, while its peripheral layer includes culturally specific evaluative meanings such as endurance, honesty, and moral responsibility. These peripheral elements are frequently realized through proverbs and figurative expressions, which reflect collective cultural experience rather than universal cognition.

In contrast, the temporal concept is shown to function as a broader cognitive construct that precedes linguistic encoding. The study confirms that time is not directly perceived but is mentally structured through such fundamental cognitive parameters as sequence, duration, and boundedness. Linguistic means such as tense, aspect, and temporal adverbials do not generate temporal meaning but rather profile selected aspects of an already existing mental model.

This distinction becomes particularly evident in the nucleus–periphery analysis of temporal expressions. The nucleus of the temporal concept is formed by universal temporal references that indicate minimal temporal specification, such as *one day* in English and *bir kún* in Karakalpak. These units reflect a generalized and culturally neutral perception of time. By contrast, the peripheral layer includes culturally and narratively expanded expressions, for example *long*, *long ago* and *erte zamanda*, which extend temporal meaning beyond chronological reference and embed it within a specific cultural narrative framework.

The results further show that fairy-tale discourse provides especially rich material for observing the peripheral expansion of the temporal concept. Formulaic expressions such as *once upon a time* in English and *bir bar eken*, *bir joq eken* in Karakalpak do not denote measurable time. Instead, they activate a mythological temporal frame in which time functions as a mental stage rather than as a chronological parameter. These formulas signal a transition into a fictional world governed by symbolic and narrative logic.

In addition, the analysis reveals that duration and sequence, as core elements of the temporal concept, are frequently foregrounded through aspectual constructions. For example:

After many years, the prince returned...

Kóp jillardan keyin batır eline qaytadı...

In both cases, the expressions *many years* and *kóp jillar* activate the cognitive feature of duration, while *after* and *keyin* highlight sequential ordering. These linguistic markers confirm that temporal meaning emerges through the interaction of grammatical and lexical elements rather than through isolated forms.

Aspectual constructions further reinforce the conceptualization of time as processual and continuous. For instance:

He was walking for days and nights...

Ol kúnler boyı jol júrip atır edi...

Here, progressive and continuous aspect forms emphasize the extended nature of the action, activating the temporal concept's feature of continuity. The results indicate that such constructions occupy the near periphery of the temporal concept, as they combine universal cognitive features with language-specific grammatical realization.

The study also demonstrates that symbolic numerals play a significant role in the distant periphery of the temporal concept, particularly in folklore and fairy tales.

Expressions such as for forty days and forty nights and qırıq kún – qırıq tún do not represent exact temporal measurement but rather symbolize completeness, trial, or transformation. These units function as cultural codes that structure narrative time cyclically rather than linearly.

Moreover, the results indicate a cross-linguistic difference in narrative temporal modeling. English fairy tales tend to structure time linearly, emphasizing progression and resolution, whereas Karakalpak fairy tales often rely on cyclical and repetitive temporal patterns connected to tradition and mythological worldview. This difference confirms that while the nucleus of the temporal concept remains universal, its peripheral realization is shaped by cultural and discursive conventions.

Overall, the results confirm that the temporal concept operates on three interconnected levels:

- cognitive (mental representation of time),
- linguistic (lexical and grammatical encoding), and
- discursive-cultural (narrative and symbolic realization).

This multi-level structure supports the view that temporality is not merely a grammatical category but a complex cognitive-cultural construct that becomes linguistically observable only through its partial manifestations.

Discussion. The findings of the present study confirm and further elaborate key theoretical assumptions of cognitive linguistics concerning the relationship between language, cognition, and culture. Most notably, the results support the fundamental distinction between linguistic concepts and temporal concepts, demonstrating that these categories differ not only in their ontological status but also in their modes of linguistic realization and analytical relevance.

First, the results align with the cognitive-linguistic view that linguistic concepts are necessarily mediated by language, whereas temporal concepts function as broader cognitive constructs that exist independently of verbalization. This observation directly supports the position articulated by scholars who argue that while all linguistic concepts are conceptual in nature, not all concepts attain linguistic status. The temporal concept, in particular, emerges as a pre-linguistic mental model that structures human experience prior to and beyond grammatical encoding. Consequently, tense and aspect do not create temporal meaning but rather selectively profile certain facets of an already established conceptual framework.

Furthermore, the application of the nucleus-periphery model proves methodologically productive for interpreting the internal organization of both linguistic and temporal concepts. The results demonstrate that the nucleus of the temporal concept consists of universal cognitive features such as sequence, duration, and continuity, which remain stable across languages. In contrast, the peripheral zones reveal significant cultural and discursive variability. This finding reinforces prototype-based theories of

categorization, according to which conceptual boundaries are gradient rather than fixed and are shaped by usage frequency, cultural salience, and discourse conventions.

The analysis of fairy-tale discourse offers particularly strong evidence for the culturally mediated nature of the temporal concept's periphery. Formulaic expressions such as once upon a time and *bir bar eken, bir joq eken* illustrate how temporal reference in narrative contexts transcends chronological measurement and instead functions as a symbolic entry point into a mythological temporal domain. In this respect, time is not represented as a linear sequence of events but as a narrative framework that organizes experience according to cultural expectations and storytelling traditions. This observation supports discourse-oriented approaches that treat temporality as a semiotic and cultural construct rather than as a purely grammatical phenomenon.

Additionally, the findings contribute to ongoing discussions concerning the interaction between universal cognition and cultural specificity. While the cognitive ядро of the temporal concept remains consistent across English and Karakalpak—reflecting shared human experience of sequence and duration—the peripheral realizations differ in accordance with cultural worldview. English narratives tend to emphasize linear temporal progression, whereas Karakalpak fairy tales more frequently employ cyclical and repetitive time models. This divergence reflects broader differences in narrative tradition and cultural conceptualization rather than structural properties of the languages themselves.

From a methodological perspective, the study demonstrates that treating temporality solely as a grammatical category leads to an incomplete understanding of its cognitive and cultural dimensions. The integration of cognitive, functional-semantic, and discourse-analytic approaches allows for a more comprehensive analysis of temporal meaning as a multi-layered phenomenon. In this sense, the results validate the decision to combine conceptual analysis with metaphorical and discourse-based methods, particularly when dealing with abstract categories such as time.

Moreover, the findings highlight the analytical advantage of distinguishing between temporal concepts as cognitive models and their linguistic realizations as grammatical or lexical markers. This distinction enables researchers to avoid conceptual reductionism and to account for cases where temporal meaning is implied or symbolically encoded rather than explicitly marked. Such cases are especially frequent in folklore and narrative discourse, where time often operates as a cultural code.

In sum, the discussion confirms that the temporal concept should be regarded as a dynamic cognitive-cultural construct whose linguistic manifestations represent only partial and context-dependent projections. Linguistic concepts, by contrast, are inherently tied to verbal expression and cultural evaluation. Recognizing this distinction not only enhances theoretical clarity but also provides a robust methodological framework for further comparative and discourse-oriented studies of temporality.

Conclusion. The present study has demonstrated that linguistic concepts and temporal concepts represent distinct yet interrelated cognitive phenomena within the framework of cognitive linguistics. Linguistic concepts are shown to be inherently language-bound, culturally marked, and obligatorily verbalized through lexical, grammatical, and discursive means. In contrast, the temporal concept emerges as a universal cognitive model that structures human experience independently of language and becomes accessible to linguistic analysis only through its partial realization in grammatical and lexical forms.

The findings confirm that the nucleus–periphery model provides an effective analytical tool for revealing both the universal and culturally specific components of temporal conceptualization. While the nucleus of the temporal concept is constituted by fundamental cognitive parameters such as sequence, duration, and continuity, its peripheral zones are shaped by narrative traditions, cultural symbolism, and discourse conventions. This is particularly evident in English and Karakalpak fairy-tale discourse, where temporal meaning is frequently expressed through mythological and symbolic formulas rather than chronological reference.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of clearly distinguishing between cognitive models of time and their linguistic manifestations. Such a distinction enhances methodological precision and offers a solid theoretical foundation for further comparative and discourse-based research into temporality and conceptual structure across languages and cultures.

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