



## A LINGUOCOGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF TIME IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN PROVERBS (BASED ON CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY AND PROTOTYPE THEORY)

Najmiddinova Nigina Alisherovna

Supervisor: Kambarova Marjan Adil qizi

najmiddinova29.nigina@gmail.com

Uzbekistan state world languages university

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20302784>

**Abstract:** This paper explores the concept of time as represented in English and Russian proverbs within the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics. The analysis is grounded in conceptual metaphor theory and prototype theory, which allow for a systematic interpretation of how abstract temporal experience is structured and categorized in language. Proverbs are examined as conventionalized linguistic realizations of culturally shared cognitive models. The study reveals that while both languages rely on comparable conceptual metaphors for time, they differ in prototype structures and evaluative focus. These differences reflect distinct cultural attitudes toward action, patience, and human agency, contributing to the understanding of cognitive and cultural variation in temporal conceptualization.

**Key words:** *concept of time, English and Russian proverbs, conceptual metaphor theory, prototype theory, cultural conceptualization, paremiology.*

### Introduction

Time is a central yet abstract dimension of human experience. Since it cannot be perceived directly, speakers conceptualize time through language by drawing on more concrete domains such as space, motion, objects or value. Cognitive linguistics emphasizes that such conceptualization is systematic rather than arbitrary and is deeply rooted in cultural experience [3; p.3-6]. Proverbs represent a particularly valuable source for analyzing time concepts because they preserve conventional models of thinking shared by a speech community. As noted in *Cognitive Linguistics: An introduction*, proverbs function as entrenched symbolic units encoding culturally stabilized meanings [1; p.654]. This paper examines English and Russian proverbs in order to uncover the conceptual metaphors and prototype structures that shape cultural understandings of time.

### Theoretical Background

#### Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual metaphor theory, introduced by Lakoff and Johnson, holds that abstract concepts are understood in terms of more concrete domains through systematic metaphorical mapping [3; p. 5–6]. In this framework, metaphor is not a stylistic device but a fundamental cognitive mechanism.

Time is one of the most extensively metaphorized concepts. Common mappings include:

*Time is money*

*Time is a moving object*

*Time is a force*

These metaphors' structure are habitual thinking and reflected in fixed expressions, including proverbs [3; p. 56–59].

#### Prototype Theory

Prototype theory, originating in the work of Eleanor Rosch and later incorporated into cognitive linguistics, challenges the classical idea that categories have clear boundaries [6; p. 27-28]. Instead, categories are organized around best examples (prototypes), with other members showing varying degrees of similarity. Evans and Green explain that linguistic categories exhibit graded membership, meaning that some meanings are more central than others [1; p. 249–252]. Applied to the concept of time, prototype theory allows us to determine which metaphorical models of time are cognitively dominant in each culture and which function as peripheral interpretations.

### Methodology

The study applies two cognitive-linguistic methods:

Conceptual metaphor analysis proverbs were analyzed to identify dominant metaphorical mappings underlying the concept of time. Prototype-based categorization identified metaphors were evaluated in terms of prototype structure: central vs. peripheral conceptualizations of time in English and Russian proverb traditions. The data consists of widely attested English and Russian proverbs drawn from established paremiological collections [2; 4; 5;].

### Analysis of the Concept of Time in Proverbs

Time as Value: The Prototype in English Proverbs

In English, the prototype metaphor for time is *Time is money / resource*. This metaphor is entrenched and productive, occupying a central position in the conceptual category of time.

Examples:

*Time is money*

*A stitch in time saves nine*

*Lost time is never found again*

These proverbs reflect a culture that prioritizes efficiency, planning, and individual responsibility. According to Lakoff and Johnson, this metaphor emerges from industrial and economic practices where time is measured, allocated, and evaluated [3; p. 57].

Time as Natural Process: The Prototype in Russian Proverbs

In Russian proverbs, the prototype conceptualization of time differs significantly. The dominant metaphor is *Time is a natural force / healer*.

Examples:

*Время лечит ("Time heals")*

*Всеу своё время ("Everything has its time")*

*Время покажет ("Time will show")*

Here, time is not treated as a resource to be controlled, but as an autonomous process. This conceptualization aligns with what Permyakov describes as a traditional worldview oriented toward cyclicity and endurance [5; p. 44–46].

Peripheral Metaphors and Cross-Cultural Overlap

Both English and Russian proverbs share peripheral metaphors such as: *Time as judge* and *Time as teacher*. However, their prototype status differs. In English, these metaphors are secondary to the resource model, while in Russian they are closer to the category center. Prototype theory explains this variability by recognizing graded membership rather than fixed category boundaries [1; p. 251–255].

### Discussion



Using conceptual metaphor theory together with prototype theory helps to explain why English and Russian speakers think about time differently. Cognitive linguistics shows that these differences are not random; they are shaped by culture and everyday experience [3; p. 3–6].

In English proverbs, time is mainly understood as something that can be controlled and used efficiently. The dominant metaphor *Time is money* presents time as a valuable resource that should not be wasted. Lakoff and Johnson note that this metaphor reflects a culture oriented toward planning, productivity, and purposeful action [3; p. 56–57]. Proverbs such as *Time is money* illustrate this idea. According to prototype theory, this understanding forms the central prototype of time in English culture [1; p. 251–253].

By contrast, Russian proverbs conceptualize time as a natural and independent force. Proverbs like *Время лечит* (“*Time heals*”) emphasize patience and acceptance. Permyakov states that Russian folk culture traditionally views time as cyclical and beyond direct human control [5; p. 45–47]. This makes the natural process model the prototype of time in Russian culture.

Both languages include similar expressions such as *Time will tell* and *Время покажет*, but their importance differs. Prototype theory explains that such meanings are more central in Russian than in English [1; p. 252–255]. Overall, English proverbs reflect action and efficiency, while Russian proverbs reflect patience and inevitability.

### Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that English and Russian proverbs encode distinct prototype-based conceptualizations of time through systematic metaphorical mappings. While both languages employ universal cognitive mechanisms, the resulting temporal models reflect culture-specific priorities and values. Conceptual metaphor theory explains how time is structured cognitively, while prototype theory accounts for variation in the centrality of models. The study confirms that proverb analysis is an effective method for exploring the interaction between language, cognition, and culture.

### References:

1. Evans, V., & Green, M. *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. Chapters 9–10.
2. Giyosiddinova, Radjabova G. “Methodological Characteristics of Corpus Technologies in Teaching Foreign Language.” *International Journal on Integrated Education*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2022, pp. 157–163. doi:10.31149/ijie.v5i1.2645.
3. Giyosiddinova, Radjabova G. “The Implementation of Spoken Corpora in Creating Teaching Materials.” *International Journal on Integrated Education*, vol. 4, no. 5, 2021, pp. 349–354.
4. Ivanov, A. (ed.). *Russian Proverbs and Their Cultural Significance*. Moscow: Linguistics Press, 1998, pp. 75–80.
5. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980, pp. 3–6, 56–59.
6. Mieder, W. *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004, pp. 97–103.
7. Permyakov, G. L. *From Proverb to Folk Tale*. Moscow: Nauka, 1995, pp. 44–47.



8. Radjabova, G. (2023). "Corpus technologies in teaching academic writing." *Foreign Languages in Uzbekistan*, 1(48), 92–103.
9. Radjabova, G. G. (2018). "The role of assessment in teaching English." *Иностранные языки в Узбекистане*, (3), 74–80.
10. Rosch, E. "Principles of Categorization." In *Cognition and Categorization*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1978, pp. 27–48.