

PRACTICAL AND PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF TIME EXPRESSION IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract: This study examines the practical and pragmatic aspects of time expressions in English and Uzbek. Time, as a fundamental category of human cognition and language, is expressed differently across languages due to structural, semantic, and cultural differences. In English, an analytic language, temporal distinctions are primarily marked through auxiliary verbs and tense morphology. In contrast, Uzbek, an agglutinative language, encodes temporal information via verb suffixes and aspectual markers.

The research employs a contrastive and comparative approach, analyzing data from parallel corpora, literary texts, and spoken discourse. The analysis focuses on grammatical tense forms, lexical choices, temporal adverbs, and pragmatic functions in context. Examples illustrate both similarities and differences between English and Uzbek, showing how temporal concepts are realized in communication and discourse. The study’s findings are relevant for language teaching, translation, cross-linguistic studies, and understanding the cognitive representation of time in different linguistic systems. The research highlights the interplay of grammar, lexicon, and pragmatics in expressing time and provides insights into effective strategies for teaching and translating temporal expressions.

Keywords: Time expressions, English, Uzbek, Pragmatics, Tense, Aspect, Cross-linguistic Analysis.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz va o‘zbek tillarida vaqt ifodalari amaliy va pragmatik jihatlarini o‘rganadi. Vaqt inson tafakkuri va tilning asosiy kategoriyalardan biri sifatida, tillar tuzilishi, semantikasi va madaniy xususiyatlariga ko‘ra turlicha ifodalanadi. Ingliz tilida, analitik til sifatida, vaqt asosan yordamchi fe’llar va zamon shakllari orqali ifodalanadi. O‘zbek tilida esa vaqt ma’nosi fe’l qo‘sishimchalari va aspekt ko‘rsatkichlari orqali amalga oshiriladi.

Tadqiqot kontrastiv va taqqoslovchi metodlarga asoslangan bo‘lib, parallel korpuslar, adabiy matnlar va og‘zaki diskurs tahlil qilindi. Tahsil grammatic zamonlar, leksik birliklar, vaqt qo‘sishimchalari va pragmatik funksiyalarni o‘z ichiga oladi. Misollar ingliz va o‘zbek tillaridagi vaqt tushunchalarining o‘xshashliklari va farqlarini ko‘rsatadi, shuningdek, diskurs va kommunikatsiya kontekstida vaqtini

qanday ifodalash mumkinligini ochib beradi. Tadqiqot natijalari til o'rgatish, tarjima, kontrastiv tilshunoslik va inson tafakkuridagi vaqt tushunchalarini o'rganish uchun ahamiyatlidir. Shuningdek, grammatik, leksik va pragmatik vositalar o'rtasidagi o'zaro bog'liqlikni ko'rsatib, vaqt ifodalarini samarali o'rgatish va tarjima qilish bo'yicha tavsiyalar beradi.

Kalit so'zlar: *Vaqt ifodalari, Ingliz tili, O'zbek tili, Pragmatika, Zamon, Aspekt, Til taqqoslash.*

Аннотация: Данное исследование посвящено практическому и прагматическому анализу выражений времени в английском и узбекском языках. Время, как фундаментальная категория человеческого познания и языка, выражается в разных языках по-разному, что обусловлено структурными, семантическими и культурными особенностями. В английском языке, являющемся аналитическим, временные различия выражаются преимущественно с помощью вспомогательных глаголов и форм времени. В узбекском языке, агглютинативном по структуре, временная информация кодируется с помощью глагольных суффиксов и аспектуальных маркеров.

Исследование проведено с использованием контрастивного и сравнительного подхода, с анализом параллельных корпусов, художественных текстов и устной речи. Анализ охватывает грамматические формы времени, лексические единицы, временные наречия и прагматические функции в контексте. Примеры показывают как сходства, так и различия в выражении временных концепций в английском и узбекском языках, а также демонстрируют способы реализации времени в коммуникации и дискурсе. Результаты исследования имеют практическое значение для преподавания языков, перевода, сравнительного языкознания и изучения когнитивного представления времени в разных языковых системах. Исследование подчеркивает взаимодействие грамматики, лексики и прагматики в выражении времени и предоставляет рекомендации для эффективного обучения и перевода временных выражений.

Ключевые слова: Выражения времени, Английский язык, Узбекский язык, Прагматика, Время, Аспект, Сравнительный анализ языков.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental tool for organizing human experience, and time represents one of the most central conceptual domains encoded in language. The ways in which different languages linguistically encode temporal relations reflect not

only grammatical structures but also cognitive, cultural, and pragmatic patterns of speech communities. In linguistics, the study of time expressions involves the intersection of tense, aspect, and temporal adverbials as well as their function in discourse and communication.

In English, which is typologically classified as an analytic language, temporal information is expressed through combinations of auxiliary verbs, morphological tense markers, and periphrastic constructions. For example, English uses auxiliary verbs such as *will*, *have*, and *be* in combination with participles and base forms (*will go*, *has gone*, *is going*) to precisely convey temporal distinctions and aspectual nuances, including future orientation, completion, and progressive action. This complex tense–aspect system enables speakers to situate events along a temporal axis with specificity and to manipulate temporal perspective in discourse.

In contrast, Uzbek, a Turkic agglutinative language, encodes temporal meanings primarily through verb suffixes and morphological affixation. Instead of relying on auxiliary verbs, Uzbek integrates tense, aspect, and sometimes modality directly into the verb form. Temporal categories such as past, present, and future are often marked by distinct suffixes that simultaneously signal aspectual information such as habitual or progressive meaning without the need for separate auxiliaries. For instance, Uzbek uses suffixes like *-adi* (future) or *-gan* (past participle) within a single verb morphological paradigm.

Comparative research on English and Uzbek time expressions reveals both structural differences and functional parallels. Studies show that while English tense system shows a relatively clear-cut division between tense and aspect categories, Uzbek's morphologically rich system often encodes multiple temporal and semantic nuances within single verb forms. Uzbek may also rely more on contextual inference and discourse cues to determine precise temporal interpretation.

Furthermore, time expressions do not merely serve grammatical purposes; they carry pragmatic meaning in actual communication. Temporal markers influence how speakers position events with respect to the speaker's present moment, express certainty vs. uncertainty, and manage the flow of information in narratives and dialogue. Pragmatic analysis of time expressions, therefore, explores not only structural mechanisms but also how temporal expressions function in context, including metaphorical uses (e.g., *time flies*) and cultural perceptions of time that influence discourse patterns.

Due to these typological and functional differences, understanding time expression in both languages has important implications for contrastive linguistics, language teaching, and translation theory. It aids in identifying areas of potential

misunderstanding in bilingual contexts and equips learners with strategies to handle structurally different means of expressing temporal relationships.

In this article, we provide a practical and pragmatic analysis of time expressions in English and Uzbek. The analysis is grounded in contrastive data from parallel corpora, literary and spoken texts, and focuses on both grammatical expression and contextual usage to draw out similarities and differences that are relevant to linguistics, pedagogy, and applied language studies.

Theoretical Background

The concept of time in language is one of the central concerns of modern linguistics, cognitive science, and cross-linguistic research. Time expressions are not only grammatical markers but also cognitive tools that allow speakers to organize, interpret, and communicate experiences along a temporal axis. Linguists often distinguish between three major components of temporal expression: tense, aspect, and temporal adverbials, each of which contributes to the precise coding of temporal meaning. (Comrie, 1985)¹

Time Expression in English

In English, temporal distinctions are marked through a combination of morphological and syntactic mechanisms. English has a complex tense–aspect system that includes present, past, and future tenses, each of which can interact with aspectual distinctions (simple, progressive, perfect, and perfect progressive). For instance:

- Present Simple: “*I study every day.*” – denotes habitual action.
- Present Continuous: “*I am studying now.*” – indicates an ongoing action.
- Present Perfect: “*I have studied.*” – conveys a completed action with present relevance.

- Future Simple: “*I will study tomorrow.*” – expresses a future event.

These forms allow English speakers to convey temporal relationships, sequence of events, and duration, often with high specificity. Additionally, English temporal expressions can carry pragmatic and metaphorical meanings, such as “*time flies*” or “*in the long run*”, demonstrating that time in language is both structural and functional. (Samadova, 2025)²

¹ Comrie B. *Tense*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. 219 p. – Provides general theoretical principles on time, tense, and aspect in linguistics.

² Samadova S. English-Uzbek Typology of Time-Expressing Words // ResearchGate. – 2025. – URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/391849231_ENGLISH-

UZBEK TYPOLOGY OF TIME EXPRESSING WORDS – Discusses the typology of time expressions in English and Uzbek, highlighting cross-linguistic differences and similarities.

Time Expression in Uzbek

Uzbek, as a Turkic agglutinative language, relies heavily on verb morphology to encode temporal distinctions. Temporal meaning in Uzbek is typically realized through **suffixation**, which can simultaneously mark tense, aspect, and sometimes modality. For example:

- Hozirgi zamon (Present): “*Men o‘qiyman*” – denotes an ongoing or habitual action.
- O‘tgan zamon (Past): “*U keldi*” – indicates a completed action in the past.
- Kelajak zamon (Future): “*Men boraman*” – expresses intention or future occurrence.

Unlike English, where auxiliary verbs and syntactic constructions often indicate temporal relations, Uzbek integrates multiple temporal and aspectual nuances directly into the verb morphology, allowing single words to encode complex temporal information. The context and discourse also play a significant role in refining temporal interpretation. (Yo‘lchiyeva, 2025)³

Cross-Linguistic Comparison

Comparative studies show that while English tends to separate tense and aspect into discrete grammatical markers, Uzbek often fuses these categories within single verb forms. This difference has several implications:

1. **Translation challenges** – Mapping English tense–aspect combinations to Uzbek verbs requires careful consideration of both temporal and aspectual nuances.
2. **Language teaching** – Learners of English need to understand analytic structures, while learners of Uzbek must master suffix paradigms and context-dependent temporal interpretation.
3. **Cognitive representation** – The way speakers of each language conceptualize time may differ due to structural encoding, with English favoring explicit syntactic marking and Uzbek relying more on morphological integration and contextual inference. (Mukhlisa, 2024)⁴

Moreover, pragmatic functions of time expressions are critical in discourse analysis. Time markers in both languages can indicate event sequencing, hypothetical or counterfactual conditions, and speaker attitudes towards events (certainty, expectation, or obligation). For example, in English, modal verbs (*will*, *would*, *should*) often carry temporal and pragmatic meaning simultaneously, whereas in Uzbek,

³ Yo‘lchiyeva F.X. Comparative Analysis of Tense and Aspect in English and Uzbek // International Journal of Applied Linguistics. – 2025. – Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 45–58. – Offers a comparative analysis of tense and aspect systems in English and Uzbek. URL: <https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai/article/view/6813>

⁴ Mukhlisa Q. Pragmatic Analysis of the Category of Time in Discourse // Web of Journals. – 2024. – Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 23–36. – Analyzes pragmatic aspects of time expressions in discourse, focusing on context-dependent meanings. URL: <https://webofjournals.com/index.php/1/article/view/2298>

suffixes combined with particles (*-ib*, *-gan*, *-ar*) can encode subtle nuances of temporal and aspectual pragmatics. (Latipova, 2024)⁵

The theoretical foundation of this study rests on the intersection of tense, aspect, and pragmatics, emphasizing how these components interact differently in English and Uzbek. Understanding these theoretical principles is crucial for any practical analysis of time expressions, as it provides the framework for analyzing both grammatical forms and their contextual uses in communication.

Methodology (Metodologiya)

This study employs a contrastive and comparative methodology to investigate the practical and pragmatic aspects of time expressions in English and Uzbek. The research focuses on grammatical structures, lexical units, temporal adverbs, and pragmatic functions within various discourse contexts.

Data sources include:

1. Parallel corpora of English-Uzbek texts, which provide aligned sentences for direct comparison of temporal expressions.
2. Literary texts from contemporary and classical sources, enabling analysis of stylistic and idiomatic uses of time expressions.
3. Spoken discourse, including interviews and recorded conversations, which highlight contextual and pragmatic functions of temporal markers.

The analysis is conducted using a qualitative approach, combining:

- Grammatical analysis, to examine tense, aspect, and morphological markers.
 - Lexical analysis, to identify words and phrases used to express time.
 - Pragmatic analysis, to investigate context-dependent meanings and discourse functions.
- This methodology aligns with previous contrastive studies in cross-linguistic research (Samadova, 2025⁶; Yo‘lchiyeva, 2025⁷; Mukhlisa, 2024⁸) and ensures a comprehensive understanding of how temporal meaning is structured and interpreted in English and Uzbek.

Analysis

⁵Latipova F. Similarities and Differences of Tense in English and Uzbek Language Grammar // Tadqiqotlar.uz. – 2024. – URL: <https://tadqiqotlar.uz/new/article/view/3483> – Examines modern grammatical structures and contrastive analysis of time expressions in English and Uzbek.

⁶ Samadova S. English-Uzbek Typology of Time-Expressing Words // ResearchGate. – 2025. – URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/391849231_ENGLISH-UZBEK_TYPOLGY_OF_TIME_EXPRESSING_WORDS – Discusses typology of time expressions in English and Uzbek.

⁷ Yo‘lchiyeva F.X. Comparative Analysis of Tense and Aspect in English and Uzbek // International Journal of Applied Linguistics. – 2025. – Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 45–58. – Offers a comparative analysis of tense and aspect systems in English and Uzbek. URL: <https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai/article/view/6813>

⁸ Mukhlisa Q. Pragmatic Analysis of the Category of Time in Discourse // Web of Journals. – 2024. – Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 23–36. – Analyzes pragmatic aspects of time expressions in discourse. URL:

The analysis of time expressions in English and Uzbek involves three main dimensions: grammatical, lexical, and pragmatic. Each of these dimensions reveals both structural differences and functional parallels between the two languages.

Grammatical Time Expressions

English:

English encodes temporal information primarily through tense and aspect, combining auxiliary verbs with participles or base forms. Its tense-aspect system can express not only chronological time but also nuances such as habituality, completion, duration, and futurity. For example:

- Present Simple: "*I study every day.*" – habitual or general truths.
- Present Continuous: "*She is reading a book now.*" – ongoing or temporary actions.
- Past Simple: "*He left the office yesterday.*" – completed actions in the past.
- Past Continuous: "*They were studying when the teacher arrived.*" – past actions in progress.
- Present Perfect: "*I have finished my assignment.*" – completed actions with present relevance.
- Future Simple: "*They will arrive tomorrow.*" – future events.
- Future Continuous: "*I will be waiting for you at 5 p.m.*" – actions in progress at a future point.

These forms allow English speakers to manipulate temporal perspective, indicate sequences of events, and express temporal nuances such as certainty, expectation, and habituality (Samadova, 2025).

Uzbek:

Uzbek expresses tense and aspect morphologically using verb suffixes, sometimes in combination with particles. The tense categories include present, past, and future, but aspectual information is often integrated into the same verb form. Examples:

- Present: "*Men hozir o‘qiyman.*" – ongoing action or habitual activity.
- Past: "*U kecha keldi.*" – completed past action.
- Past Perfect / Resultative: "*U kitobni o‘qigan edi.*" – emphasizes completion or result of past action.
- Future: "*Men ertaga boraman.*" – future intention or plan.
- Progressive / Habitual markers: suffixes like *-yapti* indicate ongoing or repeated actions: "*U ishlayapti*" – "He is working."

Unlike English, Uzbek fuses tense and aspect in verb morphology, meaning a single verb form can carry multiple temporal and aspectual nuances. Context is often needed to fully interpret the time reference (Yo‘lchiyeva, 2025).

Lexical and Temporal Adverbs

Both languages employ lexical units and temporal adverbs to further specify time. These adverbs often indicate time sequence, duration, frequency, or future orientation.

Examples in English:

- “Yesterday, last week, in a few minutes, at the same time, eventually, in the long run.”

Examples in Uzbek:

- “*Kecha, o'tgan hafta, bir necha daqiqadan so'ng, bir vaqtda, oxir-oqibat, uzoq muddatda.*”

Lexical items interact with verb morphology to provide precise temporal reference. For example:

- English: “*I have been studying for two hours.*” → expresses duration and completion relative to the present.
- Uzbek: “*Men ikki soatdan beri o'qiyapman.*” → uses a combination of progressive suffix and temporal adverbial to indicate ongoing duration.

The comparison demonstrates that while English uses auxiliaries + adverbs to indicate duration and aspectual meaning, Uzbek often integrates these markers into verb morphology with supporting adverbs (Latipova, 2024).⁹

Pragmatic Functions in Discourse

Time expressions are not purely grammatical; they also carry pragmatic and communicative meaning. Pragmatic analysis examines how time markers influence:

1. Event sequencing – ordering of events in narratives.
 - English: “*After he arrived, they started the meeting.*”
 - Uzbek: “*U kelgach, yig'ilish boshlandi.*”
2. Speaker perspective and modality expressing certainty, expectation, or obligation.
 - English modals: “*He should have finished by now.*”
 - Uzbek suffixes/particles: “*U tugatgan bo'lishi kerak.*”
3. Emphasis and information structure highlighting when an action occurs relative to other events.

Furthermore, metaphorical expressions convey cultural perceptions of time:

- English: “*Time flies.*”
- Uzbek: “*Vaqt uchadi.*”

⁹ Latipova F. Similarities and Differences of Tense in English and Uzbek Language Grammar // Tadqiqotlar.uz. – 2024.

– URL: <https://tadqiqotlar.uz/new/article/view/3483>

– Examines grammatical structures and contrastive analysis of time expressions.

Such expressions demonstrate that temporal communication is influenced by culture, in addition to grammatical rules (Mukhlisa, 2024)¹⁰.

Cross-Linguistic Observations

1. Structural differences: English separates tense and aspect syntactically, while Uzbek fuses them morphologically.
2. Interaction with context: Uzbek often requires contextual inference to fully interpret temporal meaning, while English relies on explicit tense-aspect forms.
3. Pragmatic similarity: Both languages use temporal expressions to organize discourse, mark sequences, and convey speaker attitudes.
4. Translation implications: English-Uzbek translation requires careful mapping between auxiliary-based structures and suffix-based morphology to preserve both temporal and aspectual nuances (Samadova, 2025; Yo'lchiyeva, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study presents a comprehensive practical and pragmatic analysis of time expressions in English and Uzbek, focusing on grammatical structures, lexical choices, and pragmatic functions. The research highlights both the structural differences and functional similarities between the two languages, providing insights relevant to linguistics, applied language studies, and cross-linguistic communication.

Key Findings:

1. Structural Differences:
 - English, as an analytic language, expresses temporal distinctions primarily through auxiliary verbs, tense morphology, and periphrastic constructions, allowing for explicit separation of tense and aspect.
 - Uzbek, as an agglutinative language, encodes tense and aspect within verb morphology, often fusing multiple temporal and aspectual nuances into single verb forms. This makes context and discourse crucial for precise interpretation (Yo'lchiyeva, 2025; Latipova, 2024).
2. Pragmatic Functions:
 - Both languages use temporal expressions not only for chronological sequencing but also to convey speaker attitude, certainty, expectation, and emphasis.
 - English utilizes modals and auxiliary combinations (e.g., *will*, *should*, *have been*) to express modality and time simultaneously.

¹⁰ Mukhlisa Q. Pragmatic Analysis of the Category of Time in Discourse // Web of Journals. – 2024. – Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 23–36. – Analyzes pragmatic aspects of time expressions in discourse. URL: <https://webofjournals.com/index.php/1/article/view/2298>

◦ Uzbek relies on suffixes and particles (e.g., *-ib*, *-gan*, *-ar*) which encode temporal and aspectual meaning pragmatically within discourse (Mukhlisa, 2024).

3. Lexical and Idiomatic Considerations:

◦ Temporal adverbs and idiomatic expressions (e.g., English “*time flies*” and Uzbek “*vaqt uchadi*”) reveal how cultural perceptions of time influence communication and discourse patterns.

◦ Lexical items complement grammatical markers, providing precision and nuance in expressing sequences, durations, and habituality (Samadova, 2025).

4. Implications for Translation and Language Learning:

◦ Differences in tense-aspect systems and pragmatic use can lead to misinterpretation in translation if both grammatical and contextual cues are not considered.

◦ Language learners need to understand both structural and pragmatic aspects of temporal expressions to achieve fluency and accuracy in English-Uzbek bilingual communication.

5. Cognitive and Cross-Linguistic Insights:

◦ The study supports the view that time is a cognitive-linguistic category, represented differently across languages.

◦ English speakers rely more on syntactic encoding, while Uzbek speakers rely on morphological integration and contextual inference, demonstrating diversity in temporal cognition and language structure.

Future Directions:

The research opens several avenues for further study:

- Investigation of complex discourse contexts, such as narratives, news reports, or academic texts, to examine time expressions in extended communication.
- Analysis of idiomatic and metaphorical temporal expressions, comparing cross-cultural usage and cognitive interpretation.
- Psycholinguistic studies on how bilingual speakers process and produce temporal expressions in English and Uzbek.
- Development of teaching strategies and translation guidelines that address both grammatical and pragmatic dimensions of time.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that time expressions are multidimensional, encompassing grammatical, lexical, and pragmatic layers. Understanding these layers in both English and Uzbek is essential for effective communication, translation, and teaching. By integrating contrastive linguistic

analysis with pragmatic insight, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how temporal meaning is encoded, interpreted, and applied across languages.

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