

LINGUOPRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF TIME-EXPRESSING PHRASEMES IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGE SYSTEMS

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Abstract:

This study investigates the linguistic and pragmatic properties of time-expressing phrasemes across different language systems. Time-expressing phrasemes, as fixed or semi-fixed multi-word expressions, play a crucial role in conveying temporal information and structuring discourse. The research focuses on their semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic features, highlighting similarities and differences between languages. Comparative analysis reveals that while some phrasemes are universal in their temporal reference, others are culture-specific, reflecting unique cognitive and communicative patterns. The study also examines how context, register, and pragmatic intent influence the use of these phrasemes in spoken and written communication. Findings demonstrate that understanding the interplay between linguistic form and pragmatic function is essential for effective cross-linguistic communication, translation, and language teaching.

Keywords: time-expressing phrasemes, linguopragmatics, cross-linguistic analysis, temporal expressions, discourse analysis, semantic-pragmatic features, language systems

Introduction

Language is not merely a vehicle for communication; it is also a system that encodes complex cultural, cognitive, and social realities. One of the key elements through which humans structure their experiences is the concept of time. Across different languages, speakers rely on various linguistic tools to convey temporal information, organize events, and manage discourse flow. Among these tools, **time-expressing phrasemes** play a central role. Phrasemes are fixed or semi-fixed

multi-word expressions that convey meanings that often cannot be deduced directly from their individual components. Time-expressing phrasemes, in particular, serve not only to indicate temporal relations but also to perform pragmatic functions such as emphasizing, mitigating, or contextualizing events.

The study of time-expressing phrasemes requires an **interdisciplinary approach**, combining insights from linguistics, pragmatics, cognitive science, and cross-cultural communication. From a linguistic perspective, phrasemes are interesting because their meaning is often idiomatic or partially idiomatic. For example, expressions like “*in the nick of time*” in English or «*в самый последний момент*» in Russian convey urgency and precise timing, yet their literal words do not fully explain the intended meaning. Pragmatically, these phrasemes are sensitive to context, speaker intention, and discourse register, making their analysis crucial for understanding language use in real communicative settings.

Comparative studies across languages reveal both universality and variation in time-expressing phrasemes. Some expressions, such as those denoting approximate time, punctuality, or sequence, are found in most languages, reflecting shared human cognitive models of time. Other expressions are highly culture-specific, reflecting the historical, social, and literary traditions of a particular speech community. For instance, certain temporal metaphors rooted in agrarian cycles may appear in Slavic or Turkic languages but not in English or Mandarin Chinese, which may rely more heavily on abstract numerical or clock-based references. Such differences have significant implications for cross-linguistic communication, translation studies, and second-language acquisition, as literal translation often fails to capture the pragmatic nuance of these expressions.

From a **pragmatic viewpoint**, time-expressing phrasemes are not only markers of temporality but also tools for **managing interpersonal relations**, signaling politeness, emphasis, or social positioning. For instance, the English phrase “*at the earliest opportunity*” not only indicates a prompt action but also conveys a degree of politeness and professional decorum, whereas its literal translation in another language might not carry the same connotation. Similarly,

idiomatic temporal expressions in French, such as “*dès que possible*” (as soon as possible), perform both semantic and interpersonal functions, demonstrating the inseparability of linguistic form and pragmatic intent.

Several linguistic frameworks provide theoretical support for analyzing time-expressing phrasemes. **Cognitive linguistics** emphasizes the role of conceptual metaphors and mental schemas in shaping temporal expressions. For example, the conceptual metaphor TIME IS A RESOURCE underlies English expressions like “*spend time*” or “*waste time*”, whereas other languages may conceptualize time differently, such as TIME IS A RIVER or TIME IS A CIRCLE. **Linguopragmatics**, which examines the interface between linguistic form and pragmatic function, offers tools for identifying how temporal expressions are used in actual discourse contexts. Corpus-based approaches allow researchers to quantify frequency, collocation patterns, and situational usage, while experimental studies can reveal comprehension, processing, and cross-cultural perception of temporal phrasemes.

In addition, **interlanguage studies** highlight the challenges learners face when acquiring time-expressing phrasemes in a second language. Non-native speakers often struggle to interpret idiomatic temporal expressions due to differences in cultural cognition, metaphorical mapping, and discourse conventions. For example, an English learner from a Turkic language background may interpret “*once in a blue moon*” literally, failing to grasp its pragmatic implication of rarity. Understanding these cross-linguistic differences is therefore essential for designing effective pedagogical strategies, translation guidelines, and intercultural communication protocols.

Empirical research on time-expressing phrasemes often combines **qualitative and quantitative methods**. Qualitative analysis involves identifying recurrent phrasemes, their syntactic structures, semantic fields, and pragmatic functions. Quantitative approaches may include frequency counts, co-occurrence analysis, and cross-linguistic comparison of usage patterns. Recent advances in natural language processing (NLP) and computational linguistics provide

additional tools for automating the detection and classification of phrasemes in large corpora, enabling large-scale comparative studies across multiple languages and registers.

Despite growing attention to idiomatic and phraseological phenomena, time-expressing phrasemes remain relatively understudied compared to other lexical or grammatical categories. Most existing research focuses on individual languages or small cross-linguistic samples, leaving significant gaps in understanding how these expressions function across diverse language systems. Moreover, the interplay between semantic meaning, pragmatic intent, and cultural specificity in temporal expressions has not been fully explored. This study aims to address these gaps by conducting a systematic **linguopragmatic analysis** of time-expressing phrasemes in multiple languages, highlighting their structural, semantic, and contextual features, and examining their implications for language learning, translation, and cross-cultural communication.

The main objectives of the study are:

To identify and classify common types of time-expressing phrasemes across selected languages.

To analyze their semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic properties.

To compare cross-linguistic patterns, highlighting universality and cultural specificity.

To examine contextual factors that influence the choice and interpretation of temporal phrasemes.

To provide insights into pedagogical and translation applications of understanding time-expressing phrasemes. By addressing these objectives, the study contributes to the fields of phraseology, linguopragmatics, and cross-cultural communication, offering both theoretical frameworks and practical insights. Understanding time-expressing phrasemes is particularly relevant in professional, academic, and everyday communication, where precise temporal reference and appropriate pragmatic nuance are critical for effective interaction.

Conclusion

The analysis of time-expressing phrasemes across different languages reveals the intricate relationship between language, cognition, and culture. Time-expressing phrasemes function as more than simple markers of temporality; they reflect underlying conceptual metaphors, pragmatic intent, and discourse conventions. Comparative studies demonstrate that while some temporal expressions are universal, reflecting shared human experiences of time, others are deeply rooted in cultural, historical, or environmental contexts, leading to language-specific usages that may pose challenges for cross-linguistic communication and translation.

Pragmatic functions of time-expressing phrasemes include managing politeness, emphasis, and social relationships, alongside conveying precise temporal information. The use of idiomatic or semi-fixed expressions adds a layer of nuance to discourse, highlighting the importance of context, register, and speaker intention. For second-language learners, understanding these expressions is essential for achieving pragmatic competence and avoiding misinterpretation. For translators, accurate rendering requires attention not only to semantic content but also to pragmatic and cultural connotations, emphasizing the value of linguopragmatic awareness.

From a methodological perspective, the study underscores the importance of combining **qualitative, quantitative, and computational approaches**. Corpus-based analysis allows identification of usage patterns, while cognitive-linguistic frameworks provide insight into metaphorical mappings. NLP tools can facilitate the detection of phrasemes across large datasets, supporting cross-linguistic and cross-register comparisons. Such approaches enable scholars to capture both frequency patterns and nuanced pragmatic functions, offering a holistic view of temporal phraseme usage.

Overall, the findings of this study highlight several key points: first, time-expressing phrasemes are essential for structuring discourse and managing communicative interactions. Second, cross-linguistic variation is substantial, with some expressions being culture-specific and others reflecting universal temporal

concepts. Third, pragmatic considerations—such as politeness, emphasis, and formality—play a central role in the selection and interpretation of temporal phrasemes. Finally, integrating linguopragmatic knowledge into language teaching, translation, and intercultural communication can significantly improve comprehension, accuracy, and communicative effectiveness.

In conclusion, time-expressing phrasemes exemplify the complex interplay between language, thought, and culture. Their study contributes to theoretical linguistics, pragmatics, and applied fields such as education and translation. By advancing our understanding of these expressions, researchers, educators, and practitioners can promote more effective communication, enhance cross-cultural understanding, and support learners in achieving both linguistic and pragmatic competence. Future research should continue exploring diverse languages, registers, and communicative contexts, employing computational tools alongside traditional analytical methods to deepen our understanding of temporal phrasemes and their roles in human communication.

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