

SEMANTIC AND COGNITIVE PROPERTIES OF THE CONCEPT OF “TIME” IN JAPANESE PHRASEOLOGY

Radjabov Diyor Rahmonberdiyevich

Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, Uzbekistan.

ganbaredivor@mail.ru

Annotation : This article investigates the semantic and cognitive features of the concept of “time” in Japanese phraseology based on a linguocultural approach. It examines how the Japanese perception of time, national mentality, and worldview are reflected in idiomatic expressions. The study identifies the conceptual domain, metaphorical models, and cultural representations of time in Japanese. The findings reveal unique national characteristics of the time phenomenon in the Japanese language and provide opportunities for comparative linguistic analysis.

Keywords: phraseology, time concept, semantics, cognitive linguistics, linguistic culture.

Time and time are one of the oldest universal concepts in the human mind, which is manifested in the language system through its own semantic and conceptual forms. Each nation has its own linguistic and cultural criteria for understanding, appreciating and evaluating time. In the Japanese language, the concept of “time” is deeply reflected not only through grammatical units, but also in phraseological expressions, proverbs, idiomatic expressions and metaphorical images. These expressions are formed as a product of the mentality, philosophical views and historical experience of the Japanese people and express the national attitude towards time.

Phraseological units are one of the richest lexical layers of the language, through which the people's worldview, values and way of perceiving the world are reflected. Therefore, the study of the phraseological interpretation of the concept of time in the Japanese language from the perspective of cognitive linguistics and linguistic and cultural studies is of great scientific importance. Because time is not only a physical category, but also a socio-cultural phenomenon associated with human thinking. This article analyzes the semantic structure, cognitive models, metaphorical character, and national-cultural characteristics of the concept of "time" in Japanese phraseology. The results of the study help to understand the internal conceptual world of the Japanese language and create a scientific basis for comparative analysis with other languages.

The concept of time in Japanese is expressed through many phraseological units, which are divided into several groups according to their semantic and cognitive properties. These units reflect the philosophical view of time, mentality and worldview of the Japanese people. There are the following main types of phraseological units:

Phraseological units related to natural time - in this group, time is expressed through natural phenomena such as seasons, weather phenomena, and the change of day and night.[6, 86]

Examples:

春秋に富む (shunjū ni tomu) – “rich in spring and autumn”, that is, in the most prosperous period of one's life.

一日の長 (ichijitsu no chō) – “one day's advantage”, that is, being ahead in experience.

Content: the natural periodicity of time, the comparison of human life with seasons.

Units expressing time through life stages - these phraseologisms metaphorically interpret time through the stages of human life, aging, youth, the transience of life.

Examples:

年をしる (toshi o toru) – “to take a year”, that is, to grow old.



光陰矢の如し (kōin ya no gotoshi) – “time flies like an arrow”.

Content: the concept of the impossibility of turning back time and the transience of human life.

Phraseological units in the metaphor of movement and speed - time is often interpreted as a thing in motion, a flow or a consequential event that has a direction.

Examples:

時が流の (toki ga nagareru) - “time flows”.

時が迫る (toki ga semaru) - “time is approaching”, that is, the deadline is getting closer.

Content: the concept of time as a dynamic, moving force.

Time as a value and opportunity - phraseologisms of this type show time as wealth, opportunity, chance.

Examples:

時が金なり (toki wa kanenari) - “time is gold”.

好機を逸する (kōki o issuru) - “to miss a successful opportunity”.

Content: time is a resource of economic, social and psychological importance.

Time phraseologisms with a philosophical and religious content - in Japanese culture, time is interpreted as eternity or “the present moment”, based on the philosophy of Buddhism, Shintoism and Zen.

Examples:

一期一会 (ichi-go ichi-e) - “once in a lifetime meeting”, that is, each moment is a unique blessing.

無常 (mujō) - “transience”, that is, everything changes and disappears with time.

Content: the spiritual, metaphysical essence of time, the philosophy of transience and existence.

Phraseologisms used in society and everyday life - these units show the importance of time in human activity, labor and social relations.

Examples:

時を名して稼ぐ (jikan o kasegu) - “to gain time”.

時を名してる (toki o awaseru) - “to adjust time”, that is, to coordinate actions.

The concept of time in Japanese is manifested in phraseological units not only as a calendar category, but also as a philosophical, metaphorical, cultural and life experience criterion. Each type has its own semantic load and cognitive model, reflecting the unique national thinking of the Japanese people regarding time.

In Japanese, the concept of “time” is expressed not only as an abstract concept, but also through metaphorical images that are visible, tangible and perceived through life experience. These metaphors reflect the Japanese's harmonious worldview of nature, their philosophical approach to the transience of time, and their cyclical thinking.[6,48]

Time as a moving force:

For the Japanese, time is interpreted not as static, but as energy that is constantly in motion.

Phraseological examples:

時が過ぎる (toki ga sugiru) - time is passing.

時が迫る (toki ga semaru) - time is approaching.

時が来る (toki ga kuru) – the time is coming (the opportunity has arrived).

Meaning: time is an active force that affects the subject; it approaches a person, moves away from him, or “leads” him.

Time is a river (stream) metaphor:

In the Japanese conceptual system, time flows like a river, it cannot be stopped, it changes everything with its flow.

Phraseological examples:



時の流れ (toki no nagare) – the flow of time.

光陰矢の如し (kōin ya no gotoshi) – time flies like an arrow (fast flow).

年月が流れ (toshi tsuki ga nagareru) – the years are flowing.

Content: the impossibility of stopping time, human life is compared to a particle floating in a stream.

Time is a wind metaphor:

Wind is interpreted in Japanese culture as an invisible, but tangible and fleeting force. Time is also perceived like the wind, but it cannot be stopped.

Phraseological examples:

時の風 (toki no kaze) – the wind of time.

春風駘蕩 (shunpū taitō) – the spring wind (the softness of time).

風のあるの過ぎ去る (kaze no yō ni sugisaru) – to pass by like the wind.

Meaning: time passes, but its traces remain in the heart – this is the main principle of Japanese aesthetics.

Time is a process of transition:

In this model, time is seen as a transition from level to level, a gradual change.

Phraseological examples:

時をしてる (toki o koeru) – to overcome time.

時代が移る (jidai ga utsuru) – eras are changing.

季節が変る (kisetsu ga kawaru) – seasons are changing.

Content: time is a process of transformation; the concept of transition reflects the Japanese philosophy of not being afraid of change.

Time is a model of rotation and cyclicity:

In Japanese philosophy, time is perceived not as linear, but as a circle (a natural cycle). This concept was formed under the influence of Shintoism and Buddhism.

Phraseological examples:

年々歳々 (nen'nen saisa) – a phenomenon that repeats itself every year.

巡る時 (meguru toki) – revolving time.

春夏秋冬 (shunka shūtō) – the cycle of the four seasons.

Meaning: time is circular, it returns, it repeats itself; it is a symbol of hope and continuity in Japanese culture.

The above analysis shows that:

Time is a dynamic movement and change, time is a force independent of man

Time is a river, flow and transience, life passes in the flow of time

Time is a wind, the emotional value of an invisible but influential moment

Time is a transition, transformation, each moment is a new stage

Time is a cycle, naturalness, thinking in harmony with the seasons

The concept of time is one of the main cognitive categories in the thinking of all peoples, which is reflected in the phraseological system of different languages through its own metaphorical models. In Japanese, Uzbek and English, time, while having common universal properties, acquires a national character in accordance with the mentality, philosophical worldview and cultural values of each nation.[4,98]

Phraseological units indicating differences in national thinking:

Time is a fleeting moment of life 一期一会 (ichi-go ichi-e) – seize every moment as a unique moment.

Time is pressure and duration 時間に追われる (jikan ni owareru) – time is chasing, losing to time.



Time is a feeling and mood 時間姿 (toki no sugata) – the idea of time that has the “image” of time.

Time is a decisive force 時が正してから (toki ga kaiketsu suru) – time solves everything, time cures.

In Japanese, the concept of time is more philosophical and metaphysical in nature, directly related to nature, spirituality and transience.

In Uzbek, time is valued on the basis of religious and life experience, it is seen as a criterion of opportunity and destiny in human life.

In English, time is interpreted more as an economic and practical resource, with time management, productivity and results at the center.

Therefore, although "time" is a common universal category in the phraseology of all three languages, their phraseological forms of expression reflect a unique aspect of the national mentality.

In Japanese, the concept of “time” has a wide semantic field, consisting of the following main microconcepts:

Cyclic time 春 (spring), 秋 (autumn), 年々歳々 (year by year) Natural cycle, renewal

Transience 無常 (mujō), 一瞬 (isshun), 儚い (hakanai) Eternity, impermanence of time

Qualitative time 良い時 (yoi toki), 運命の時 (unmei no toki) Moments of particular importance

Quantitative time 時間 (jikan), 分 (fun), 秒 (byō) Units of measured time

Spiritual time 心の時 (kokoro no toki), 感じる時間 (kanjiru jikan) Subjectively perceived time, a moment in the mind

Influence of Buddhist philosophy: time is not constant, it changes (無常, mujō)

Influence of Shintoism: time is part of a natural cycle

Zen influence: considers the present moment as the most important time (一期一会 ichi-go ichi-e)

So, time metaphors in Japanese reflect how a person understands life, their relationship with nature, and their philosophy of existence.

The Japanese people's model of time perception is strikingly different from that of other cultures.

In Japanese linguistic thinking, "time" is not linear, but cyclical, harmonious with natural processes, transient, but within this transience, a source of understanding of beauty and spiritual depth. In Japanese, phraseologisms and metaphors of time are directly related to the continuous flow of human life, the change of seasons, and the fleeting beauty of nature. "無常 mujo" (everything is transient) and "物の哀れ mono no aware" (an inner feeling that arises due to the transience of beauty) reflect the Japanese people's perception of time as a spiritual and intellectual experience. Linguistic units - 今 (ima - now), 昔 (mukashi - ancient times), 一瞬 (isshun - a moment), 永遠 (eternity) - indicate the relativity of time and its internal connection with human life. Through these units, time is represented not only as a physical phenomenon, but also as a cognitive concept, that is, a cultural-national model that is formed in the human mind.

Thus, the Japanese language and phraseology represent time:

- as a fleeting beauty;
- as a spiritual experience connected to the cycles of nature;
- as an emotional and philosophical process in the human mind.

This confirms that in the Japanese national thought, the concept of time acquires a rich, deep philosophical meaning, both aesthetic, spiritual and cognitive.



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