



Conceptualizing Time in a Second Language: A Cognitive-Linguistic Study of Temporal Metaphor Awareness among Iraqi EFL Learners

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Abstract

Humans commonly utilize firsthand experiences and metaphors to understand abstract concepts, according to cognitive linguistics studies. This study examines how EFL students understand time as a cognitive and cultural construct by reading a literary work. Additionally, it examines students' perceptions of time as linear, cyclical, or psychological. To do this, three ideas are evaluated in the study. First, it is anticipated that EFL students will favor linear time thinking. Second, it is expected that psychological time metaphors would be used often in literary interpretation. Third, there could be a connection between students' time thinking and the metaphors they employ in their writing. The study used a mixed approach research design. EFL university students took part by responding briefly to a dramatic passage and completing a questionnaire. According to the results, many students believe that time is moving forward like a river or a road. They also think that past experiences impact emotions and personality over time. Students also noticed that time seemed slower and heavier because of the play's silence. The results show that, in addition to linguistic ability, people's perceptions of time are influenced by culture, mood, and literature reading. The study concludes that reading literature improves students' comprehension of abstract ideas.

Paper Info

Keywords

Time Perception, EFL Learners, Cognitive Linguistics, Literary Reading, Psychological Time, Metaphor Use.

doi: <https://doi.org/10.63797/bjh>.

1. Introduction

Applied linguistics requires an understanding of the meaning construction processes of second language learners. Early models of communicative competence placed a high

value on sociolinguistic and grammatical knowledge (Canale & Swain, 1980). Becoming fluent in a language requires more than just understanding grammar. Furthermore, people must understand the meaning of words in different circumstances. They must be able to arrange and adjust their communication style. This includes skills such as strategic and discursive competency (Bachman 1990).

Reading literature necessitates a high degree of interpretive skill. Literary works, as opposed to factual writing, frequently rely on emotional tension, ambiguity, and inference. Readers must recreate relationships and determine the causes. Rosenblatt (1978) defines reading as a transactional activity in which the reader and the text interact to generate meaning. Readers must actively fill up any gaps in literary works. Interpretation, rather than passive decoding, requires cognitive creativity (Iser, 1978). Time is an important factor in interpreting stories. The way readers organize events in memory, anticipation, and thought determines the meaning of the tale. According to Ricoeur (1984), narrative transforms lived time into structured storytelling time. Narrative is an essential strategy for shaping the human experience (Bruner, 1991). Understanding time is consequently crucial for interpretation. Readers aren't just event watchers. They organize them mentally.

Students' cognitive abilities improve as they study literature in a second language. Grammar is just one aspect of learning a language. It is also vital to understand symbols and culture (Kramsch 1993). Reading literary works connects students emotionally and intimately with the language (Hanauer, 2001). When students read emotionally charged novels, they use both their cognitive abilities and their emotions.

EFL research frequently concentrates on quantitative skills, despite the fact that many studies look at linguistic meaning. They go over grammar and vocabulary. Little is known about how students understand abstract ideas like time when they read literature. It is an indication of how language proficiency and cognitive abilities are related. The comprehension of time in a play by undergraduate EFL students is examined in this study. It examines the ways in which individuals interpret the text. Understanding how second-language learners interpret abstract ideas is the goal. In EFL classes, this method adds to discussions on cognition, communication, and literary acquisition.

2. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) examines how individuals understand abstract concepts via more concrete experiences. The concept was first introduced by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). They argue that metaphor is more than merely a stylistic device in poetry. It is the basic process of cognition. People consider metaphors before speaking about them. In other words, metaphors shape how individuals perceive reality. Later, Lakoff (1993) expanded on this concept by demonstrating that many everyday utterances include systematic metaphorical mappings across domains. Bodily experience has an impact on abstract reasoning (Johnson, 1987). That's to say, abstract thought is based on physical, embodied patterns.

Time is an important abstract concept in CMT. Time cannot be seen, touched, or quickly sensed, but physical stuff can. As a result, it is often expressed in metaphorical terms. People understand time through more familiar domains such as motion, space, and objects (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). This idea is built on by Lakoff (1993), who defines metaphor as a mapping from a concrete source domain to an abstract target domain. In the case of time, the target domain (time) is understood via spatial and

motion-based source domains. Time metaphors appear in many languages and cultures (Kövecses, 2010). The metaphorical structure of time is systematic, not haphazard. Several conventional metaphorical mappings manifests the way time is conceptualized. TIME IS MOTION is an extremely popular mapping. In this architecture, time functions similarly to a person or object. People say, "The holidays are approaching." Another map is TIME IS A PATH. In this situation, life is characterized as a journey. Expressions like "moving forward in life" reflect this mapping. A comparable metaphor is TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT, in which time moves past us, as in "time flew." Another recurring topic is TIME IS A CONTAINER. People talk about being "in the past" or "in a difficult period." These are examples of systematic correspondences between spatial experience and abstract thought, as defined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

Time is often understood via everyday events. These mappings are not confined to language use; they are part of the standard cognitive framework (Evans & Green, 2006). The metaphor TIME IS A PATH may be seen in words like "moving forward in life." Time is a place or container, as evidenced by expressions such as "stuck in the past." TIME IS MOTION is proven by phrases like "time has slowed down." These inclinations are intentional and systematic. They are part of the fundamental conceptual frameworks of human cognition (Lakoff, 1993; Kövecses, 2010). These sentences are examples of how people arrange abstract events. Thus, time is more than simply a quantity. Embodied and spatial metaphors impact understanding and cognition.

2.1. Temporal Conceptualization in Language

The senses cannot directly perceive time. Time cannot be observed or measured independently. As a result, many experts contend that cognitive patterns of place and experience influence how people perceive time. Instead of measuring time physically, cognitive linguistics investigates it through embodied and mental processes. Several investigations have demonstrated that temporal language reflects underlying cognitive mechanisms. For example, speakers frequently use spatial schemas while thinking about time (Boroditsky, 2000; Clark, 1973). Thus, time in language is not only described, but also psychologically arranged and comprehended.

Time can be conceived of as linear in a common way. Time is depicted as linear time, which represents forward motion along a route. In English, this method is extensively employed. Phrases like "falling behind schedule" and "the weeks ahead" show how time is seen as motion. Spatial signals influences how people interpret temporal claims by linking motion and time (Boroditsky, 2001). To deal with time constraints, humans typically use spatial thinking. Gestures can anticipate both past and future occurrences (Núñez & Cooperrider, 2013). As a result, linear time is built on spatial movement.

Cyclical time is an additional method. In cyclical time, events are viewed as recurring rather than progressing toward a preset future. Phrases like "history repeats itself" and "the cycle begins again" represent this point of view. Cyclical temporal patterns are valued in certain cultures (Evans, 2013). Dahl (1995) notes that different languages have different aspect systems and tenses. It affects the grammatical organization of time. Daily conversations might not always adhere to a rigid schedule. Culturally shaped conceptions of time are often reflected in language.

Psychological time corresponds to perceived duration. Rather than the actual duration of events, it refers to how long they appear. Emotional intensity and attention can influence how we see time. Moments may look longer or shorter based on emotional cues (Droit-Volet and Gil, 2009). Conceptual blending enables speakers to cognitively

compress or extend time (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). When someone says, "The moment lasted forever," they are manipulating time mentally rather than physically. Internal states have an influence on temporal cognition, which is all that psychological time in speech is.

Last but not least, occurrences are characterized as unavoidable or susceptible to uncontrolled forces in deterministic time. According to this viewpoint, time flows in accordance with need or fate. Language force dynamics show how language systems incorporate patterns of inevitability and compulsion (Talmy, 2000). Temporal thinking commonly involves such frameworks. According to Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca (1994), grammatical markers of tense and aspect can also indicate completeness or certainty. Phrases like "her time had come" are used in conversation to depict time as an external force impacting humans. Time is not a neutral background in any of these models, whether linear, cyclical, psychological, or deterministic. Language patterns representing human experience, perception, and cultural context are employed to cognitively construct it.

2.2. Literary Discourse and Cognitive Processing

Literary discourse enables readers to process words more thoroughly and carefully than in common conversation. Literary works usually use imagery, ambiguity, and emotional effect. As a result, readers must infer meaning rather than decipher it. Literature promotes complex mental simulations. Stockwell (2002) describes literary reading as a continuous cognitive interaction with figurative patterns and shifting perspectives. Poetic language improves perception by foregrounding and diverging (Tsur, 2008). People can experience a range of emotions and mental states via reading literature. This strategy is comparable to social interactions in the real world (Oatley 1999). Metaphor is not only a decorative element. It is essential for thinking, especially when using language creatively (Gibbs, 1994). Metaphorical thinking is encouraged by literary sources. They shed light on images, feelings, and underlying meanings rather than just describing things.

Literary meaning is rarely clear. It stems from gaps, consequences, and structural disparities. Wolfgang Iser (1978) contends that readers actively fill textual gaps in order to achieve coherence. Meaning is therefore co-created. When evaluating stories, readers develop mental spaces that link various conceptual areas (Fauconnier, 1997). According to David Herman (2002), narrative understanding necessitates keeping track of changes in time, viewpoint, and purpose. Fiction employs theory-of-mind procedures, which encourage readers to discover hidden mental states (Zunshine, 2006). In literary discourse, metaphor and silence complement each other. What isn't said is often more essential than what is expressed. Emotional intensity affects time perception, and readers mentally expand or compress scenes dependent on narrative emphasis. Literary works are appropriate for exploring time conception due of the cognitive effort required.

2.3. *The Stronger* by August Strindberg

The Stronger (1889) is a short one-act play written by August Strindberg. On Christmas Eve, the story follows two women at a café. Only one of them speaks. The other remains silent during the deed. The speaking persona exhibits more emotional instability, jealousy, and competitiveness. The silent character never responds vocally. There is

very little physical activity. Rather than external circumstances, psychological struggle generates dramatic intensity.

This content is suitable for cognitive and temporal analysis for a wide range of applications. First, there is minimal motion. The lack of tale advancement focuses emphasis on internal states. Second, the psychological stress level is high. Emotional conflict is distinguished by pauses, hesitations, and subtle accusations. Third, silence is an efficient structural approach. As Pierre Macherey (1978) notes, what a book does not say may determine meaning just as much as what it says. Silence warps the reader's perception of time in *The Stronger*. Because there is no dialogic conclusion, moments seem drawn out. Lastly, the play displayed how the past and present are strongly intertwined. The speaking persona makes frequent allusions to past relationships and shared experiences. Experienced time and narrated time combine to produce narrative time (Ricoeur, 1984). This encounter is clearly portrayed in Strindberg's play. The past shapes and destabilizes the current discourse.

The Stronger is a distinct literary realm because of these components. Time shifts, stillness, and metaphorical thinking are all readily apparent. Its profound significance contrasts with its straightforward flow. Because of this, the play may be used to examine how literary language influences thought and how time is experienced.

Research Objectives

1. Determine the general temporal orientation tendencies of EFL learners.
2. Look at how EFL students read literary texts by using a metaphorical understanding of time.
3. Examine how metaphorical representation in literary discourse and general temporal orientation are related.
4. Examine if variations in gender and skill level affect patterns of temporal conceptualization.

Research Questions

1. Which temporal orientation inclinations are most prevalent among EFL students?
2. How do EFL students conceive time metaphorically when interpreting a literary text?
3. How are metaphorical representation in literary discourse and general temporal orientation related?
4. Do variations in gender and skill level affect patterns of temporal conceptualization?

Research Hypotheses

1. EFL students will show a predominantly linear temporal orientation.
2. EFL students will use psychological time metaphors when interpreting a literary text.
3. Metaphorical representation in literary discourse and general temporal orientation will be significantly related.
4. Variations in gender and skill level will affect patterns of temporal conceptualization.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

An exploratory mixed-methods strategy was used in this investigation. The overall temporal orientation preferences of the students are examined in the quantitative component. It shows trends in people's perceptions and time management. Participants' usage of metaphorical ideas of time in literary language is examined in the qualitative component. This design seeks to establish a connection between authentic interpretive performance and generic time perception in a literary context.

3.2. Participants

About sixty-six undergraduate EFL students participated in the study. The Department of English and College of Education-Qurna at Basrah University were the sources of participants for the 2025–2026 academic year. Participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous. No financial or academic incentives were offered.

They are all fourth-year students (31 Intermediate and 35 Higher Proficiency). The participants categorized their language proficiency as intermediate, upper-intermediate, or advanced. The primary purpose of this self-report was to draw descriptive comparisons. During the study, no formal proficiency testing was conducted. Among them are 40 women and 26 males. Every participant has already read literary works for class assignments.

3.3. Instruments

a. Time Orientation Questionnaire

The first tool was a *Time Orientation Questionnaire* developed expressly for this study (see Appendix 1). There were 15 Likert scale items in all. Each problem was rated on a 5-point scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Three specialists in the field assessed it.

A questionnaire was employed to assess participants' overall temporal perception preferences. The items were designed to illustrate deterministic, psychological, linear, and cyclical concepts of time. This section was meant to assess the participants' general time orientation before proceeding to literary interpretation.

b. Literary Interpretation Task

The second tool was a literary interpretation exercise. It sought to demonstrate how students understood time in literary studies. Participants read an adaptation of August Strindberg's 1889 novel *The Stronger*. While maintaining readability for EFL readers, the modification retained the basic topic and psychological strain.

After reading the information, participants answered four open-ended questions. These questions focused on the play's metaphorical structure and chronological portrayal. The key topics of discussion included participants' impressions of silence, emotional strain, and the link between the past and the present.

1.4. Procedure

A Google Form was used to gather data. Initially, participants used a shared link to view the online form. The permission declaration appeared on the first page. Before continuing, participants gave their consent. The *Time Orientation Questionnaire* was then filled out by the participants. They were shown the modified literary text after submitting their answers to the Likert-scale questions. They were told to carefully read

the paragraph. After the reading, participants completed the four open-ended interpretation questions after responding to comprehension questions. It took around fifteen to twenty minutes to finish the full operation. Every answer was immediately captured and safely kept. No personally identifiable information was gathered.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

Quantitative data was analyzed by descriptive statistics to assess the study's hypotheses. The mean and standard deviation for each questionnaire item were determined (see Table 1 below). Simple group comparisons were also used to assess variations in temporal orientation preferences. Thematic coding was used to assess qualitative replies. The coding structure was based on four specific categories:

1. A metaphor for linear time.
2. A metaphor for cyclical time.
3. Psychological Time Frame
4. Deterministic Framing

In each open-ended response, we looked for language and mental hints about these temporal models. Hand coding was used. In order to guarantee consistency in category categorization, responses were thoroughly examined. As necessary, responses were cross-checked to remove subjective bias. This type of study links statistical patterns in temporal orientation with actual metaphorical thinking in literary language.

As seen in Table 1, the descriptive statistics identified broad trends in the people's temporal conceptions. A mean score of 3.85 (SD = 0.61) for linear time perception indicates good agreement with linear time models. In general, participants believe that time is advancing in a particular direction. Time as motion, in which the past is seen as behind and the future as ahead, seems to be the most widely used metaphor. Many students used analogies like freeways, rivers, and travels to explain time. They consider time to be a river that never stops flowing." Additionally, time is "like a journey that moves us toward the future." People often utilize physical analogies to comprehend abstract concepts, according to the conceptual metaphor theory. Spatial movement and time are frequently related (Cappelle, 2009; Moore, 2017). Instead than describing time as static, participants characterized it as dynamic. The first hypothesis of the study, which examined how students view time, is significantly supported by this finding. Students link progress, growth, and personal development with time. Thus, our cognitive perception of time is impacted by psychological and societal factors.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Scale	Mean	SD
Linear Time	3.85	0.61
Cyclical Time	3.60	0.92
Psychological Time	3.86	0.85
English Time Awareness	3.32	0.82

The mean score for cyclical time perception was 3.60 (SD = 0.92), indicating a considerable degree of agreement. Participants employ more than just linear time models. Instead of rigid conceptualization, its cohabitation indicates a fluid temporal understanding. Participants revealed mixed temporal models of time perception. Both

linear time and emotional recurrence were common in the responses. Participants showed that they understood that emotions could resurface or linger over time. Both chronological and psychological time are included in this dual idea. Multiple temporal models may be retained by humans at the same time (Evans, 2004). *The Stronger's* Christmas Eve scene is the climax of earlier emotional stages. Psychological stress is increased by the close connection between time and place. Time was described by readers as both emotionally repetitive and poignant. People's perspectives on time and their lives can be influenced by literature.

The highest mean score was obtained via psychological time accumulation (3.86, SD = 0.85). The participants overwhelmingly agreed that an individual's identity is shaped by the feelings and experiences they gather throughout time. The literary text's emotional and psychological perception of time is strongly supported by this discovery. Additionally, it fits with the thematic structure of *The Stronger*, which emphasizes the accumulation and impact of emotional experiences on interpersonal relationships. The qualitative results showed that participants' perceptions of time and power dynamics in the play were significantly impacted by quiet. Many students said that being still was emotionally draining and slow. A student had wrote, "Silence makes time feel slower and heavier, like time is not moving." "Silence creates tension and makes the conversation feel longer than it is," said another. These replies confirm Kane's (1984) dramatic theory, which claims that silence functions as nonverbal communication. Mlle. Y's silence in *The Stronger* is not a sign of weakness, but of psychological resistance. Participants acknowledged silence as a purposeful dramatic element. literary methods here alter time perception. The findings are consistent with performance theory, which suggests that silence may transmit meaning (Acheson, 2008; Kane, 1984; Laermans, 1999).

Time does not present as a chronological element in *The Stronger*, but rather as a psychological buildup. Mrs. X and Mlle. Y's relationship highlights the significance of prior experiences. The problem is still internal rather than external. Mrs. X's portrayal of the worm within the apple alludes to a slow internal change. Speech and silence are indicators of unresolved jealousy and rivalry. The intensity of the emotions of the past is still felt in the present. Students' responses show a similar viewpoint. Time was used to determine emotional maturity and human growth. It was said that the past continued to shape identity and conduct. There was always memory in the here and now. Experience and self-reflection were linked to personal development where memory acts as a structural agent in the formation of identity. Additionally, the drama's main tension was defined as psychological and emotional struggle. Time was viewed as a human evolution influenced by experiences and memories. It was thought that the past actively affected perception, identity, and behaviour. It was considered that the emotional past affected current relationships.

English time awareness had a modest mean score of 3.32 (SD = 0.82). Participants stated that time is expressed differently in Arabic and English. However, their general view on time was largely unaffected by this understanding. According to this study, there is little cognitive remodeling of time perception and a limited ability to understand other languages. The findings showed that there was little cross-linguistic comprehension of the variations in Arabic and English temporal expression. According to students, Arabic and English time expressions might feel different at times. "English expresses time differently from Arabic," a student wrote. Another individual said, "Some English expressions feel unnatural," Linguistic relativity proposes that language

impacts cognitive perception (Wolff, & Holmes, 2011; Everett, 2013; Bohnemeyer, 2020). Nonetheless, English language acquisition had a minimal effect on individuals' cognitive reconfigurations of time perception. Rather, they demonstrated awareness without making any significant cognitive adjustments. Rather than fully altering cognitive temporal models, acquiring a language raises awareness.

There were no statistically significant differences between male and female participants or between proficiency levels in terms of group differences (all $p > .05$). This implies that opinions about time were mostly consistent across demographic categories. Though the differences were not statistically significant, women had somewhat higher mean scores on the majority of categories, particularly psychological time accumulation and cycle time perception. Gender has no discernible impact on temporal conceptualization in this cohort. These similarities support ideas of cognitive universality, which postulate that many social groupings share some conceptual analogies.

Instead of being physical, the struggle in *The Stronger* is psychological. Emotion, memory, and previous competition are the means by which Mrs. X and Mrs. Y compete. Mrs. X asserts authority by words, but Mrs. Y uses quiet to convey authority. Their current conduct is shaped by the stress of their prior experiences. The conflict is driven by emotional history rather than biological differences. Identity and time are more influenced by cultural and emotional experiences than by gender. This pattern is supported by the qualitative data. Time was described using similar metaphors by both male and female individuals. Time manifested as motion, development, and accumulation of emotions. These parallel pictures corroborate the lack of significant gender-based variance in temporal perception. It was envisioned as "a river that never stops" and as a force that "moves forward and we cannot go back."

Table 2: Group Differences in Temporal Conceptualization

Scale	Higher (n=35)	Intermediate (n=31)	Female (n=40)	Male (n=26)	p (Prof.)	p (Gender)
Linear Time	3.82	3.88	3.89	3.78	.70	.47
Cyclical Time	3.59	3.60	3.73	3.40	.96	.14
Psychological Time	3.76	3.97	3.91	3.77	.32	.50
English Awareness	3.26	3.39	3.33	3.29	.52	.84

Furthermore, the findings revealed that temporal perception remained consistent across levels of language ability. Learners with intermediate and advanced skill had similar time conceptualization patterns. Higher English skill had little effect on participants' sense of time. Language skills alone may have less of an influence on temporal cognition than cultural or cognitive factors.

The Participants' conceptions of time as an emotional and psychological concept were considerably influenced. "Time is not only hours and minutes; it is emotions and memories," or "the play shows that silence can make time feel longer." The play's framework places an emphasis on psychological tension rather than action. The

participants also employed philosophical notions such as fate, destiny, and divine control to understand time. Time was either regarded as an uncontrollable force ("Time is God's control over life") or as predetermined ("Time is fate and destiny"). Unlike Western ideas that emphasize human temporal activity, these viewpoints reflect cultural and religious cognitive frameworks. The sense of inevitability in *The Stronger* is expressed via unresolved past ties. Characters are unable to break free from their emotional pasts, illustrating how past experiences still shape present identities.

The findings have important implications for English instruction. After reading literature, participants' emotional and cognitive understanding of abstract language seemed to increase. Many students said that time looked emotional, saying things like "after reading this play, I realized that time is emotional" and that they now "think about time differently because of literature." These findings support communicative language education, which emphasizes meaning-based learning (Qasserras, 2023; Thio, 2005; Dörnyei, 2013; Ellis & Shintani, 2013; Tauchid et al., 2025). Reading literary works can help students become more emotionally and linguistically aware. Temporal expressions can be taught using cultural and psychological backgrounds in addition to grammar. The goal of the study, which is to promote cognitive development in English language learning, is supported by this.

5. Conclusions

According to the study, EFL students preferred linear approaches to understanding time. Most participants described time as flowing continuously, like a river, a road, or a cruise. Additionally, students realized that in emotional circumstances, time may seem repeating or cyclical. There is no one sense of time that learners rely on. They combine emotional and sensory interpretations with linear movement to better understand temporal concepts.

Literary interpretation has frequently used psychological time analogies. When describing time, students frequently employed cognitive and emotional imagery, including shadows, internal metamorphosis, emotional growth, and personal development. Instead of emphasizing physical or mechanical time, the literary work directed students to concentrate on memory, emotional tension, and character psychology. In the play, silence was crucial. Students claimed that silence changed their perception of time and heightened the emotional tension between characters. Students' comprehension of abstract ideas like time was influenced by literary structure and dramatic style.

The relationship between temporal orientation and metaphorical framing was also investigated in this study. Pupils who had a linear perspective on time were more inclined to characterize personal growth as progress and forward motion. To quantify this association, no statistical study was carried out. The results provide conceptual and descriptive evidence. They don't offer statistical evidence that temporal thinking and discourse framing are related.

However, the limitations of the study should be noted. The study made extensive use of self-reported interpretations, which could represent individual viewpoints rather than broad trends. Additionally, the study only looked at one literary work, which limited how broadly the results might be applied. Additionally, the linkages were investigated conceptually rather than statistically because neither experimental nor correlational analysis was carried out.

Future research might examine how different cultural groups see time in order to better understand how culture affects temporal cognition. Research might also examine how

different literary genres' narrative structures affect temporal reasoning. Finally, a more thorough investigation may look at the relationship between metaphor use, cognitive framing, and language proficiency.

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Appendix 1

Temporal Orientation and Time Conceptualization Survey

Section 1: Background Information

1. Gender

- Male
 Female
 Prefer not to say

2. Academic Level

- 2nd Year
 3rd Year
 4th Year

3. Self-Rated English Proficiency

- Intermediate
 Upper-Intermediate
 Advanced

Section 2: Temporal Orientation Scale

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Scale: 1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Linear Time Orientation

1. I imagine the future as something in front of me.
1 2 3 4 5
2. I think of time as moving forward in a straight line.
1 2 3 4 5
3. The past feels behind me.
1 2 3 4 5
4. Life moves forward toward the future.
1 2 3 4 5

Cyclical Time Orientation

5. Time repeats itself in cycles.
1 2 3 4 5
6. Events return in different forms.
1 2 3 4 5
7. Life feels like a series of repeating patterns.
1 2 3 4 5

Time as Accumulation

8. Experiences build up over time and shape who we are.
1 2 3 4 5
9. Emotional pain becomes stronger as time passes.
1 2 3 4 5

Determinism vs Agency

10. The future is shaped mainly by our decisions.

1 2 3 4 5

11. Some events are already determined and cannot be changed.

1 2 3 4 5

Metalinguistic Awareness

12. English expresses time differently than Arabic.

1 2 3 4 5

13. I feel I think differently about time when speaking English.

1 2 3 4 5

14. Some English time expressions feel unnatural to me.

1 2 3 4 5

Optional Open Question (Short Answer)

In one or two sentences, describe how you imagine time (for example: as movement, repetition, growth, fate, etc.).

Section 3: Reading Task (The Stronger By August Strindberg)

Instructions: Please read the short version of the play carefully before answering the questions.

There are no right or wrong answers. Write your responses in short paragraphs (3–5 sentences).

Reading Passage

The scene takes place in a café on Christmas Eve evening. Two women meet by chance. They begin talking about their past friendship, past relationships, and how past experiences shaped their present lives.

Mme. X talks about how she believes time has shaped who she is today. She remembers past events, past emotions, and past relationships as things that still influence her present life. She feels that her past experiences continue to move with her through time like a shadow.

Mme. X believes that time moves forward like a path. She thinks people move through time toward the future, carrying memories from the past. She also speaks about emotional time, saying that emotional experiences can grow stronger as time passes.

Mlle. Y remains mostly silent. Her silence creates emotional tension and makes Mme. X feel that time is slowing down during their conversation. The silence feels long and heavy, as if time is not moving normally.

Mme. X compares emotional influence to something that enters a person's life slowly and changes them over time. She says past relationships can shape identity the same way a worm slowly enters an apple and changes it from inside.

At the end of the conversation, Mme. X believes she is stronger because she has a family, social stability, and emotional control over her life's direction. She believes she has moved forward in time, while Mlle. Y remains emotionally stuck in the past

Comprehension and Interpretation Questions

1. How many main characters are in the play?

One Two Three

2. What is the main type of conflict in the play?

Physical conflict Psychological and emotional conflict Political conflict

3. How is the past represented in the play? (Short Answer)
4. Which of the following best describes time in this text?
 Time is like movement forward Time is like emotional accumulation
Time is like fate or control Time is unclear
5. Is time moving forward, repeating, or emotionally staying still? Explain. (Short Answer)
6. Do you think the past influences the present in this play? How? (Short Answer)
7. How does silence between characters affect the feeling of time? (Short Answer)
8. Do you think reading this play changed how you think about time? Explain briefly. (Short Answer)

Abstract

تشير الدراسات في اللغويات المعرفية إلى أن البشر غالبًا ما يستخدمون الخبرات المباشرة والاستعارات لفهم المفاهيم المجردة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة كيفية فهم طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للزمن كمفهوم معرفي وثقافي من خلال قراءة نص أدبي. كما تبحث الدراسة في تصورات الطلاب للزمن باعتباره خطيًا، دوريًا، أو نفسيًا. لتحقيق ذلك، تم تقييم ثلاثة افتراضات في الدراسة. أولاً، من المتوقع أن يفضل طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية التفكير في الزمن بصورة خطية. ثانيًا، يُتوقع أن تُستخدم استعارات الزمن النفسي بشكل متكرر في التفسير الأدبي. ثالثًا، قد توجد علاقة بين تصور الطلاب للزمن والاستعارات التي يستخدمونها في كتاباتهم.

اتبعت الدراسة منهجية بحثية مختلطة. شارك طلاب الجامعة من متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من خلال الاستجابة بشكل مختصر لمقطع درامي واستكمال استبيان. أظهرت النتائج أن العديد من الطلاب يرون الزمن كأنه يتقدم مثل النهر أو الطريق. كما اعتقدوا أن التجارب السابقة تؤثر على المشاعر والشخصية مع مرور الوقت. لاحظ الطلاب أيضًا أن الزمن بدا أبطأ وأثقل بسبب صمت المسرحية. توضح النتائج أنه بالإضافة إلى القدرة اللغوية، تتأثر تصورات الأفراد للزمن بالثقافة والمزاج وقراءة الأدب. تستنتج الدراسة أن قراءة الأدب تحسن فهم الطلاب للمفاهيم المجردة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تصور الزمن، متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، اللغويات المعرفية، القراءة الأدبية، الزمن النفسي، استخدام الاستعارة.