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Analysing Metaphors of Temporal Concepts in the Novel of "the Fig Tree of Temples" From Cognitive Semantics Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This research explored metaphors of temporal concepts in the novel "The Fig Tree of Temples," utilizing cognitive semantics regarding time. This concept manifests in concrete representations of places and objects in literature and poetry, rendering temporal concepts objective and comprehensible. This novel was selected since the author used a significant atmosphere of time metaphor conceptualization in the processes of story plot.

Method: The study employed a qualitative approach to examine metaphors associated with temporal concepts, dividing the analysis into primary and secondary temporal concepts understood through cognitive semantics. The time concepts were explored through the theoretical framework established by Evans and Green (2006) who semantically categorized the coding processes of time concepts in the novel authored by Mahmoud in 1979. The investigation focused on identifying source and target terms within the metaphors of temporal concepts, assessing their frequency and analyzing the sentences that featured these temporal concept mappings. Ultimately, a total of 1137 mappings were identified and categorized into 12 domains of source and target metaphorical concepts related to temporal concepts. A manual coding process was utilized based on the categories of primary and secondary temporal concepts.

Results: The findings indicated that temporal concepts-motion mappings, particularly those related to temporal concepts sequence, exhibited the highest frequency, while observer-motion temporal mappings were the least frequent. Additionally, the occurrence of primary temporal concepts was found to be lower than that of secondary temporal concepts.

Conclusions: The implications of findings are expected to enhance readers' comprehension of novels that incorporate metaphorical representations of temporal concepts, thereby fostering a semantic understanding of narrative coherence.

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Introduction

Metaphor serves as a means to comprehend and articulate abstract ideas through cognitive processes (Sojudi & Ghanbari, 2013, p.139). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), individuals interpret their tangible cognive and semantic experiences both externally and internally. Further expanding on this notion, researchers such as Evans (2013) have connected the concept of temporal concepts to human social and physical experiences (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 54). Cognitive linguistic theory examines the interplay between language and its underlying conceptual framework. In essence, the way language is conceptualized is a system that individuals uncover through their experiences and relate to the external environment (Arman et al., 2021). The concept of temporal concepts is established within our continuous existence. People envision themselves at a fixed point in space where the flow of temporal concepts occurs or traverses this point (Aswadi & Modiri, 2021; Johnson, 2016). For instance, when we state that "spring has passed," it implies that we have moved beyond the spring season, suggesting a stationary position while temporal concepts progresses. Temporal concepts is represented through objective and physical instances throughout the day, or it is quantified and assessed (Evans, 2004, p. 3).

Temporal concepts is generally an internal concept from a cognitive perspective and, according to personal experiences, linguistic metaphors and culture, it forms and becomes objectified in the mind and cognition (Evans, 2004/ 2013). Humans systematize, organize and conceptualize these experiences. The understanding of temporal concepts as an object, place or space plays the most prominent role in the social concepts of language. This belief can be thought of as an objectification of temporal concepts, in which the object or body and its properties are attributed to temporal concepts (Evans, 2004). For example, in the sentence: The morning is coming, the morning finds one of the properties of the subjectivity that performs the action (coming). In the case of being an object, for example: The night is long, length is one of the properties of objects. Or in the case of place: He disappeared in the darkness of the night, the darkness of the night is in the form of a place or a container in which the person is immersed. In the case of space, temporal concepts can be metaphorically represented in various ways, just like how the night had covered the whole mountain, creating a space that envelops the entire landscape. This metaphorical representation highlights the interconnectedness of space and temporal concepts, as well as the way in which they can be perceived and experienced.

Cognitive science is a multidisciplinary field that encompasses various sciences, including intelligence, mind, philosophy, psychology, artificial intelligence, linguistic and cultural studies. This field has been evolving since the 1950s, bringing together different disciplines to study the complexities of the human mind and its cognitive processes. One interesting aspect of cognitive science is the exploration of how the mind represents concepts and constructs metaphorical and

abstract schemas based on physical instances in the external world. This process of mapping physical experiences onto mental representations helps us make sense of the world around us and understand complex ideas in a more accessible way. This idea, put forth by Assvadi and Modiri (2021), underscores the importance of metaphorical thinking in shaping our understanding of the world and our place within it.

Conceptual metaphor is the systematic modeling between conceptual elements of one domain of human experience that is tangible and objective, on another domain that is usually more abstract, namely the destination domain (Moolodi et al., 2013). According to cognitive linguists, human thought is conceptual and metaphorical, and human understanding is the path to simulate and understand intangible and abstract domains based on them with the help of understandable and tangible conceptual domains. The domain of origin is the same concept that is understandable and tangible for humans, and the destination domain is abstract and intangible (Davoodi & Baharzadeh, 2019).

Cognitive semantics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on the relationship between language and cognition. It explores how our mental processes shape our understanding and use of language, and how language in turn influences our thinking. Cognitive semantics emphasizes the importance of context in interpreting and using language, as well as the role of metaphor and other cognitive processes in shaping our linguistic expressions. By studying how we conceptualize and categorize the world through language, cognitive semantics sheds light on the intricate connections between language, thought, and perception. This field of study has important implications for fields such as psychology, philosophy, and artificial intelligence, as it offers insights into how the human mind processes and organizes information through linguistic means. Overall, cognitive semantics provides a rich and complex framework for understanding the intricate interplay between language and cognition.

Cognitive semantics posits that our understanding of temporal concepts is deeply intertwined with our bodily experiences, suggesting that the way we conceptualize temporal concepts is shaped by how we physically interact with the world. This viewpoint emphasizes the importance of a conceptual framework that is grounded in tangible, sensory experiences. According to Evans and Green (2006), the significance of a conceptual framework lies in the physical experiences that are associated with it, highlighting the connection between our bodily experiences and our cognitive understanding of abstract concepts like temporal concepts.

Language plays a crucial role in shaping our conceptualizations of temporal concepts, as it serves as a bridge between the mental concepts we hold and the external world. When we use language to talk about temporal concepts, we are drawing on our internal understanding of temporal concepts while also referencing external markers of temporal concepts. For example, the terms "today" and "yesterday" are conventional designations that help us communicate about the passage

of temporal concepts within a 24-hour framework. These terms serve as reminders of the temporal progression that we experience in our daily lives, allowing us to effectively communicate with others about temporal concepts-related concepts.

In the construction of meaning, conventional definitions and specific terms play a key role in helping us make sense of abstract concepts like temporal concepts. By using these language markers, we are able to anchor our understanding of temporal concepts to specific reference points and establish a shared understanding with others. This process of linguistic categorization allows us to organize our experiences and communicate effectively about the passage of temporal concepts in a way that is meaningful and relatable to others. Meaning is constructed at the conceptual level, and meaning construction is equivalent to conceptualization. That is, a dynamic process in which conceptual functions and background knowledge are applied with the help of linguistic units (Evans, 2004).

Cognitive linguistics is an approach that considers language as a means of organizing and transmitting information. The study of the conceptual and empirical foundations of linguistic categories in linguistics and formal structure is a manifestation of the conceptual system. Cognitive semantics was first proposed by Lakoff (1990) and, according to him, is the linguistic knowledge that an individual has of the world around him. This approach examines meaning and its emergence in the real world; Concepts such as metaphor, metaphorical space, conceptual mixture, conceptual metaphor, and the understanding and experience of one thing based on its correspondence with another (Klomberg et al., 2024). This relationship, which is a set of correspondences between two semantic domains, is called mapping. For example, if we say that temporal concepts is gold (Shamsizadeh & Shokri, 2019). The term “mapping” is derived from mathematics and means the connection between the conceptual domains of origin and destination (Jamshidi & Mirdehghan, 2021). The term "connection" in this context refers to the relationship between the conceptual domains of origin and destination. In mathematics, this concept is often used to describe how two points or sets are related to each other in a particular context. It can also be applied in various other fields, such as computer science, physics, and engineering, where understanding the connection between different elements is crucial for solving complex problems. By exploring and analyzing the connections between these conceptual domains, the researchers can gain valuable insights and knowledge that can help us make informed decisions and advancements in their respective fields.

In the metaphorical mapping: “Time concepts is gold”, time is abstract in the source domain and gold has an objective meaning in the target domain (Evans, 2006, p. 308). The correspondence of both is called mapping. Therefore, time is compared with gold in terms of value. While time is not tangible and is a concept of the passage of seconds in the mind. That is, it cannot be weighed, measured, or measured. Therefore, the conceptual domain of the source has a conceptual relationship with the target. In the mapping (time is gold), four conceptual relationships are seen:

1. Gold (origin) Time (destination);

2. Value (material) Value (spiritual);

3. Measurement (gram) Measurement (second, minute, hour, day, etc.);

4. Rare and expensive Irreplaceable and scarce;

5. Beautiful and dazzling Lovely and dear

The properties of the metal (gold) are projected from the origin domain to the properties (time) in the destination domain but the reverse is not true. The movement also shows that the movement is from gold to time, that is, it cannot be said that gold is time.

The mapping always takes place from origin to destination in the circulation of temporal concepts. Evans and Green (2013, 2006) proposed cognitive notions of temporal concepts in which two divisions are formed, both referring to the present and the future, and referred to as observer-centered and temporal concepts-centered:

1. Observer-centered: the observer is either moving of fixed.

2. Time-centered is temporal sequence: the observer is outside the time sequence.

In observer-centered conceptual metaphors, the observer is placed on the axis, which acts in two ways: either moving towards time (we are approaching the exam time) or is stationery and time comes towards him and passes him (Friday has passed). In time-centered, where temporal sequence is considered, events and happenings occur one after the other and the observer is not present. These are the events that are moving from the future to the past, for example (Christmas is before February). In this sentence, the time of Christmas is consecutive with the month of February and has a back-and-forth relationship, and there is no mention of the observer (Raisi et al., 2010).

In the cognitive model of moving time, the experiencer, who is in the present and stationary, witnesses moving temporal events that are conceptualized in the form of objects. These objects move from the future towards the person and after passing him into the past, and based on this movement, the passage of time is perceived. In the cognitive image of the moving person, time is a scene that the person passes through, and time is perceived due to the person's movement towards temporal events that are conceptualized as places. For example:

1. We are approaching Christmas.

2. We have passed the deadline.

In these examples, time is conceptualized as a stationary place and it is through the person's movement that the passage of time is perceived. The third image is temporal sequence and is related to concepts such as earlier and later, and unlike the previous two images, the person does not play

a role. Instead, an event is perceived in relation to another temporal event earlier or later. For example:

1. Monday comes before Tuesday.

2. Wednesday comes after Tuesday. In these examples, later comes before earlier, and the earlier event is perceived because it occurs before the later event.

Evans (2004) pointed that temporal concepts is the product of the understanding of the process of temporal concepts passing in the human mind. Based on this, anthropologists understand and experience events outside of temporal concepts and based on that, they conceptualize temporal concepts experiences. We understand temporal concepts in a non-temporal, symbolic and non-abstract way and try to create concrete instances for it with conventional words such as hour, day, minute, today, tomorrow, etc. This conceptualization is very close to the studies of Lakoff and Johnson (2003) who have discussed conceptual metaphors regarding temporal concepts, place and object schemas. Evans (2004) believed that the way we perceive temporal concepts can be related to our previous experience of temporal concepts and this relationship becomes tangible and concrete when it is accepted and used by speakers of a language. For example, the concept of (yesterday) in the minds of Persian speakers refers to the temporal concepts when it has passed since 12 o'clock at night and we have entered the next day. This is an unwritten contract between Persian speakers that is with us from birth to death and is an experience inseparable from these words. In other words, conceptual metaphors of temporal concepts are rooted in the beliefs, convictions, and culture of a society (Kövecses, 2005, p. 2).

Evans and Green (2006) divided the conceptual structure of temporal concepts into two levels: lexical concepts and cognitive model levels. The lexical concepts level is divided into two subsets: primary and secondary temporal concepts. Primary temporal concepts include duration, instantaneous, exemplar, and eventual. Secondary temporal concepts include matrix, agency, measurement of temporal concepts, and commodity. The cognitive model level is divided into observer-centered with two subsets of moving observer and moving temporal concepts, and temporal concepts-based model (sequential).

Cognitive linguistics is the recognition and study of metaphor. Aristotle first provided a simple definition of metaphor and described it as “transferring the name of one thing to another” and believed that metaphor is specific to language and for this reason it should be studied in literary arts and crafts. This is the classical view of metaphor that has been prevalent among us to this day. The second view in the study of metaphor is called the romantic view, in which metaphor was limited to literary language and was considered a necessity of language and thought for the world and evidence for the role of imagination in conceptualization and reasoning, and as a result, there was no distinction between automatic language and literary language (Safavi, 2013, p. 368).

Lakoff and Johnson (2017) presented a new theory about metaphor for the first temporal concepts in 1980 in their book "Metaphors We Live By". In their view, the human perceptual system inherently has a metaphorical institution that is used involuntarily and unconsciously in ordinary life. In order to understand the world around him and explain abstract concepts, humans need to create a connection between tangible and intangible realms so that they can understand intangible concepts, and the only way is to conceptualize and think metaphorically. In cognitive linguistics, the existence of the one-to-one relationship between elements of the external world and linguistic forms is questioned. Cognitive linguists believe that a single situation can be expressed in different ways in language and that different ways of identifying (coding) a single situation imply different conceptualizations. On the other hand, some temporal concepts of a linguistic form identify different conceptualizations (Golfam et al., 2009).

Metaphor is not just a literary device or a form of speech, but an active process in the human cognitive system. The applications of metaphor are not limited to the field of literary studies and the use of words, phrases or sentences; metaphor, as a useful tool, plays an important role in recognizing and understanding phenomena and matters and in fact creates a cultural model in the mind according to which the behavioral chain is planned. A major part of our conceptual system is metaphor, which includes deep and stable concepts such as temporal concepts, events, causes, morality, mind, etc. (Hashemi 2010).

Lakkof and Johnson (2018) distinguished between conceptual metaphors or metaphorical concepts on the one hand and linguistic metaphors or metaphorical expressions on the other. Conceptual metaphors or metaphorical concepts refer to abstract ideas and metaphorical structures existing in the mind. While linguistic metaphors or metaphorical expressions refer to linguistic chains that realize those abstract concepts in some way (Golfam et al., 2009). According to the new and cognitive approach, "metaphor is the understanding of a domain of experience based on a completely different empirical domain. Conceptual metaphor is an expressive manifestation of human knowledge of the world around him, and has a broader and deeper nature than verbal and ornamental use. The human perceptual system has a metaphorical nature, and metaphor is used unconsciously and involuntarily in human daily life (Hashemi, 2010).

Metaphor can be considered a mapping of the source domain onto the target domain. This mapping is done systematically, in accordance with human ontological knowledge (Lakoff, 1993). For all metaphors, Johnson (2016) regarded a source domain and a target domain. It seems that the source domain is more objective and empirical, and the target domain is more abstract. In cognitive linguistics, temporal concepts is considered a metaphorical concept, and since humans do not have the sensory and bodily means to directly understand it, they necessarily use the mappings of the understandable concept of place for its understanding and linguistic application. The conceptualization of temporal concepts is based on the mapping of the perceptible domain onto the incomprehensible domain, where temporal concepts, which is not perceptible to the five human

senses, is considered a material object or place (space) and is compared to the observer's position or motion. They acknowledge that temporal concepts is place, or the passage of temporal concepts is motion, or the passage of temporal concepts is the motion of an object. Lakoff perceived temporal concepts in terms of place. Temporal concepts can also be perceived in terms of material things (objects and places) and motion (Saeedehghan et al., 2019).

Lakoff asserted that "Since motion is continuous and one-dimensional, the passage of temporal concepts is continuous and one-dimensional" (Sojudi, 2006, p. 47). Lakoff also raised specific cases of this argument with examples. The first case is that the observer is stationery and temporal concepts is a material thing in motion relative to the observer. The components of this mapping are:

1. Time is a thing.

2. The passage of time is motion.

3. Future times are in front of the observer and past times are behind him.

4. Something moves and something else is stationary, that stationary thing is the center of reference.

In the second special case, temporal concepts are fixed places and the observer is moving relative to them (Lakoff, 1993). For example, at the beginning of the novel it is stated that "he wanted to be where he could see the uprooting of the trees and shrubs in the garden", where the observer is stationery and temporal concepts is moving. And when it is said that "one must go to the bottom", the observer is in motion and temporal concepts is fixed. Temporal concepts is understood as an abstract concept based on a moving place or object, both of which are non-abstract and tangible, and the metaphor of "temporal concepts as place" is one of the fundamental metaphors that is abundantly seen in different languages (Golfam et al., 2009). Most cognitive theorists and experts (e.g. Kövecses, 2006, 2019) believe that the conceptualization and perception of temporal concepts is possible through space and movement.

In an attempt to determine the reasons for the use of spatial concepts, Kövecses (2006) confirmed the essential difference between the concepts of temporal concepts and space and states that temporal concepts is an intangible chain of consecutive events that begins in the past, flows in the present, and continues in the future. According to this definition, temporal concepts corresponds to the spatial state in which objects are placed on a line. Of course, the line in the spatial state has one dimension. As a result, temporal concepts is a one-dimensional concept and its flow is one-way from the past to the future. However, space is a three-dimensional concept in which movement is reversible. While there is no reversibility in temporal concepts. The domain of temporal concepts can be quantitative or qualitative. In the domain of temporal concepts, quantity is continuous and takes on a spatial or object concept (Rasekh Mahand, 2009, pp. 141-140). For instance:

1. How far is it from your home to school? Two responses can be asserted:

2. 2 kilometers (answer based on the spatial domain) or 20 minutes (answer based on the temporal domain)

Evans (2004) uttered that unlike space, temporal concepts is not a tangible and physical sensory experience, and unlike the human sensory-perceptual system that is dedicated to evaluating spatial experience, there is no similar system dedicated to processing the experience of temporal concepts in humans. However, we are aware of the passage of temporal concepts, and it seems that this awareness of temporal concepts is an internal and abstract experience. Although temporal concepts does not have a physical substance that is objectively known, it is nevertheless a real experience.

The Novel "The Fig Tree of the Temples"

The novel The Fig Tree of the Temples was published in 1979, at the end of Mahmoud's 40-year writing career. The story is apparently about the demise of a relatively aristocratic family, but it has many obvious and hidden layers that can be examined from different angles. The Fig Tree of the Temples is considered sacred, and in this story, with its age of several generations, it affects the lives, thoughts, and behaviors of the people in the story to such an extent that many of their events, thoughts, and discourses are mainly metaphorically and conceptually tied to it. This tree holds the authority of temporal concepts in order to display the conceptual patterns of temporal concepts metaphorically and with systematic linguistic representations, as if it were a motionless observer whom people and things pass by from the future to be buried in the past, but at the same temporal concepts, by turning to the past, it is again an observer of the events of all three temporal concepts which is one of the challenges of this article.

Metaphorical patterns of temporal concepts see the tree as an observer of temporal concepts and the passage of objects and events. Here, the observer is a tree that observes the coming and passing of everything. In the present study, the conceptual metaphor of temporal concepts in the story of the Fig Tree of the Temples was studied using the theories of cognitive linguists (Zandian et al., 2020). The research objectives were to examine the vocabulary and concepts related to temporal concepts that have metaphorical patterns and representations of conceptual metaphors related to temporal concepts. If we can achieve the conceptual patterns of temporal concepts in the novel, we can reach a general framework of this metaphor and its role in the narrative structure and body of the novel. In most chapters, the events of the present, the distant past, and the recent past are intertwined in such a way that a temporal sequence is seen in them.

Most research and theses in the field of conceptual metaphors, and especially the conceptual metaphor of temporal concepts, have studied this subject in poetic works, and studies have been conducted less frequently in prose works and are rare in Persian novels. The present study can be new in its kind for the following reasons. First, there is a scarcity of analysis and criticism in the works of Ahmad Mahmoud, especially his novels. Second, the conceptual metaphor of temporal

concepts in Persian novels has been scarcely studied. Third, given the multiplicity of characters and events and the apparent lack of coherence of events in terms of temporal concepts and space, it is difficult to arrive at a coherent framework and model of the metaphorical conceptualization methods of temporal concepts in this novel based on linguistic theory. Therefore, a model can be provided to researchers for examining similar cases that is new in its kind (Kövecses, 2019).

In the novel “The Fig Tree of Temples”, analyzing temporal concepts mappings through the lens of cognitive semantics delves into the intricate ways in which temporal concepts is woven into the narrative. Rather than a simple progression from past to present to future, temporal concepts in this novel is depicted as a multifaceted entity, where events from different temporal planes intersect and influence one another. By closely examining the temporal markers scattered throughout the text, readers are able to piece together a more nuanced understanding of the characters' lives and choices. Through the characters' interactions with temporal concepts, we are able to glimpse into their innermost thoughts and emotions, as well as the intricate web of memories, cognition, and experiences that shape their perceptions of reality. This exploration of temporal concepts through cognitive semantics not only enriches our reading experience but also allows us to uncover the deeper themes and philosophical musings on the nature of temporal concepts, memory (Pour Seyyed Aghaei & Ghazi Moradi, 2024). The author seeks to convey the ephemeral nature of human existence in “The Fig Tree of Temples”.

In the present study, the metaphorical concept mappings of temporal concepts and space were determined and categorized to reach the cognitive frameworks and patterns of the characters of the story to understand various temporal phenomena. In a descriptive analysis, the purpose of this study was to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1. How are the abstract concepts of temporal concepts conceptualized in the novel ‘The Fig Tree of the Temples’?

RQ 2. To what extent are the inter-domain mappings and their frequency in the novel ‘The Fig Tree of the Temples’ presented?

RQ 3. What mappings are seen in the novel ‘The Fig Tree of the Temples’?

Materials and Methods

Design of the Study

The research adopted a qualitative approach and the theoretical framework was based on Evans and Green's (2006) theory of metaphors of temporal concepts in the novel "The Fig Tree of the Temples" (Ahmad Mahmoud, 1979) based on cognitive semantics. According to Evans's patterns that the ways of conceptualizing temporal concepts are in two forms: person-centered and temporal concepts-centered. Examples that confirm the above patterns were extracted and categorized and

then examined to determine which pattern they followed. Since identifying conceptual metaphors in the text, especially long texts, is not an easy task, the exploration of time concepts was conducted using the theoretical framework proposed by Evans and Green (2006), which semantically classified the coding processes associated with these concepts. A manual coding approach was employed, focusing on the distinctions between primary and secondary temporal concepts. Then, the data were extracted and their frequency was compared.

Corpus

The corpus of the study was the novel "The Fig Tree of the Temples" by Ahmad Mahmoud (1979) to uncover the metaphorical concepts of temporal concepts via cognitive semantics. Ahmad Mahmoud (1911-1992) published the novel The Fig Tree of the Temples in two volumes and 1083 pages, and the main theme of this novel and its characters is from the southern region of Iran. The novel reflects the local, political and social culture of about 60 years ago.

Data Collection Procedure

A qualitative method was utilized for the categorization of data from corpora that have been annotated with conceptual time metaphors.The qualitative method included: 1. Manual search done by two linguists who identified the time concepts based on Evans and Green's (2007) theoretical framework; 2. Searching for lexical units related to the source domain: The semantic aspects of time metaphors were discussed to identify the exact source of the time metaphor category; 3. Searching for lexical units related to the target domain: The target domain of time metaphor concepts in the exact categories were determined; 4. Searching for sentences containing lexical units from the source and target domains: The sentences in the context of paragraphs were examined to locate the relationships between source and target domains namely mappings; 5. Searching based on metaphor markers to identify the type of primary and secondary time concepts; and 6. Extracting data from corpora in which conceptual maps have been labeled.

To explore metaphors in linguistic corpora, metaphors were identified and extracted line by line.

Another phase of the methodology was to search for phrases in which a lexical metaphorical units existed. In this phase, these units were determined during the course of discourse so that it could be considered as a temporal concepts metaphor. The data collection method was done non-randomly from the novel of Ahmad Mahmoud in consultation with two linguists to ensure data reliability up to 85% agreement. Data analysis was carried out qualitatively.

In examining and extracting the conceptual structure of temporal concepts, steps such as finding a word related to the concept of temporal concepts, searching for the type of temporal concepts, destination words, source words, determining the type of mappings, and determining the frequency

and analyzing them were carried out. The primary and secondary concepts of temporal concepts in this study are given with examples:

Primary concepts

1. Duration: Time has speed. (It takes 2 hours to get to school).

2. Momentary: Time is a person. (Night appears in black shadow).

3. Example: Time is repetition. (Night after night is coming).

4. Eventual meaning: Time is a phenomenon. (The time is not fixed).

Secondary concepts:

1. Matrix: Time is flow. (Time is passing).

2. Time measurement: Time is clock. (It is 12 o'clock).

3. Commodity: Time is money. (You get $12 for an hour).

4. Location: Time is location. (Lost in the Plain of Night).

Results

In examining the data, the mappings were categorized into categories of lexical concepts and cognitive models, and their frequency was determined by analyzing the conceptual structures of temporal concepts and metaphorical lexical concepts in the novel. Finally, 1137 mappings were extracted. Conceptual construction of temporal concepts are divided into two main categories including lexical concepts and cognitive models. Lexical concepts included pprimary and secondary temporal concepts. Primary concepts has four subcategories of duration, instantaneous, exemplar, and eventual. Secondary concepts included four subcategories of matrix, agency, measurement of temporal concepts, and commodity. Cognitive models are divided into observer-based model (i.e., moving observer and moving time) and concepts-based model (sequential). (Table 1)

Table 1. Conceptual Mappings of Temporal Concepts

Conceptual construction of temporal concepts (1137) 100%	**Level of lexical concepts (416)59/36%**	Primary concepts (167)14/40%	Duration (30)96/17% Instantaneous (27)17/16% Exemplar (79)31/47% Eventual (31)56/18%
		Secondary concepts (249)86/59%	Matrix (45)08/18% Agency (71)51/28% Measurement of temporal concepts (104)76/41% Commodity (28)25/11%
	Level of cognitive models (721)41/63%	Observer-based model (268)17/37%	Moving observer (163)82/60% Moving time (105)18/39%
		Temporal concepts-based model (sequential) (453) 83.62%	

Table 1 shows the conceptual maps of temporal concepts in which the cognitive model level with (721) 41.63% and the lexical concept level with (416) 59.36% had the highest frequency. Secondary temporal concepts with (249) 86.59% frequency were seen the most and primary temporal concepts with (167) 14.40% frequency were seen the least. In other words, conceptual metaphors of temporal concepts are used more cognitively and a cognitive understanding of temporal concepts and temporal concepts-based and observer-based maps is needed to understand the circulation of temporal concepts in a cyclical manner in the story. Temporal concepts sequence has the highest frequency in the mappings used with 62.83% (453), followed by observer-moving mappings with 60.82% (163) and temporal concepts-moving mappings with 39.18% (105).

Discussion

Temporal concepts sequence mappings do not just simply refer to the linear progression of temporal concepts from past to present to future. Regarding the first research questions, the abstract temporal concepts are cyclically represented in the novel ‘The Fig Tree of the Temples’. They involve a more complex understanding of temporal events, where the observer serves as the narrator of the story, positioned on the sidelines rather than at the center of the temporal axis. This unique type of mapping allows for the placement of temporal events in a sequential order, creating a one-sided perspective that can be seen as a form of "temporal integration". This is in line with Sojodi and Aghnabari (2012) who stated the flow of cognitive concepts of time moves in a unidirectional manner in a specific sequence relative to one another. Through analyzing these temporal phenomena, it becomes evident that they possess various characteristics that can be found in Ahmed Mahmoud's novel. These characteristics include the dimensions of author’s cognitive domains of time concepts and volume, the mortality of events, their state of motion or stillness, and their proximity or distance in relation to each other. Additionally, these temporal values can take the form of commodities or develop personality and corporeality, as it is in line with Lakoff and Johnson (2017). This expanded understanding of temporal concepts sequence mappings

highlights the intricate nature of temporal events and their interconnectedness within a narrative framework.

The result has created temporal concepts schemas as a movement schema in the fluidity of the mind. This is in line with the theories of Evans (2004, p. 3). The cognition of time concepts used as place is intertwined with movement that is consistent with Evans and Green's (2006, pp. 46-45) ideas of primary and secondary temporal concepts metaphors. One example of the rapid duration of temporal concepts is the successive arrival of the Tree bearers, which reaches the fifth Tree bearer, and narrates the story of dozens of events along with the comings and goings of the Tree bearers.

In response to the second research question that explores the inter-domain mappings and their frequency in the novel "The Fig Tree of the Temples", the data analysis revealed that besides spatial characteristics, various other attributes are utilized to symbolically represent temporal concepts in the novel including dimensions like volume, weight, and physicality. Temporal concepts is depicted as either static or in motion, and can be perceived as either distant or near, or even as perishable. The Fig Tree in the Temples serves as a symbol for temporal concepts, with its trajectory not being fixed, leading the reader to constantly oscillate between the past and the present. Mahmoud's portrayal of temporal concepts in the novel showcases a personification of temporal concepts, where it is conceptualized as either observer-oriented (temporal concepts as a moving observer) or as a sequential progression of temporal concepts. This is in line with Maldar (2022) who believed exploration of temporal concepts through various metaphors adds layers of depth and complexity to the narrative, inviting readers to reflect on the fluidity and subjective nature of temporal concepts itself.

At the beginning of the novel, the final events of the novel, namely the relocation of the Azarpad family, are narrated. Then, temporal concepts in the novel returns to the beginning of the story and then reaches the end. The temporal concepts sequence has the highest frequency in this sense that it engages the reader more and is not linear, and perhaps this has increased the beauty of this story. Another effect of the temporal concepts sequence in the aesthetics of this novel is that the reader cannot guess the subsequent events and reads the story with more enthusiasm. This result is consistent with that of Davodi and Baharzadeh (2019) stating that metaphorical concepts of temporal concepts are less visible in observer-centered and temporal concepts-centered mappings. This indicates the author's beautiful prose, which has not used temporal concepts events as usual and has created a new style in novel writing. In addition, characters or events have been less of a focus, and the disruption of temporal concepts of events has been more considered.

In Mahmoud's novel, "The Tree Bearer" the tree serves as a powerful symbol of temporal concepts, encapsulating both the passage of temporal concepts and the cyclical nature of events. As the tree stands witness to the social problems unfolding around it, it becomes a focal point for

the characters in the story, drawing scholars to its side at different points in temporal concepts. This recurring motif of scholars visiting the tree mirrors the concept of temporal concepts as explored by Bahrami Rahnama (2020), who suggest that temporal concepts is not linear but rather moves in a sequential manner, shifting from the future to the past and back again. Through the presence of the tree bearer, Mahmoud highlights the interconnectedness of past, present, and future, weaving a complex narrative that reflects the intricate workings of temporal concepts itself.

In fact, the beauty of Mahmoud's writing is that he does not see the axis of temporal concepts as linear, but rather as a false circle that has become a tool for oppression of humans. The instrumental view of humans towards the tree and the symbol of temporal concepts as a part of it clearly demonstrates this centrality. The space of the maps indicates the stagnation of temporal concepts and the repetition of deprivations, suicide, ignorance, prejudice, pretense of sanctity, and corruption of the ruling system in managing the environment around “the Fig Tree of the Temples”. This result is consistent with Azim Oghli Oskoui et al. (2022) that the environment of the story affects the constituent elements and the texture of the text.

In the novel “The Fig Tree of the Temples” concerning the third research questions, twelve mappings are explored as: "Temporal concepts is a person (The night breathes quietly)"; temporal concepts is a place (He was lost in the night plain);, Temporal concepts is a movement (Night is coming); Temporal concepts is an object (The night is long/short); Temporal concepts is an agent (Temporal concepts has aged us); Temporal concepts is a plant (The morning has scattered new branches); Temporal concepts is a container (The days have passed full of joy); Temporal concepts is a stream (Moments are flowing); Temporal concepts is a bird (Temporal concepts has slipped from our hands); Temporal concepts is an edible (Life has been swallowed in temporal concepts of despair); Temporal concepts is a caravan (Days are passing); Temporal concepts is a commodity (Seconds have robbed him of his life); Temporal concepts is a path (Life is long); Temporal concepts is a work (Your turn has come). In these depictions, in addition to the fact that temporal concepts is metaphorically personified and takes on a human quality, the passage of temporal concepts is not one-way and indicates the social and cultural environment of that temporal concepts, which indicates the cultural poverty of the members of society from the past to the present and then back to the past.

Conclusion

The findings of the study displayed a great use of temporal concepts of the cognitive model that were followed by the use of lexical concepts with the highest frequency. Secondary temporal concepts frequency was higher than primary temporal concepts. In other words, conceptual metaphors of time are used more cognitively and semantically in the novel. This shows that the time is used as temporal concepts-based and observer-based to focus on the circulation of time concepts in a cyclical manner from the past to present time.

Implications of the study suggest a closer look into metaphorical aspects of contemporary novels that are cognitively-oriented. The sequence of time concepts with the highest frequency at the “Fig Tree of the Temples” is a mysterious and sacred phenomenon that has captured the attention of many scholars and spiritual seekers. Researchers in linguistics and literature may analyze conceptual metaphors of time in other novels following the method of the present study. Results suggest that temporal concepts is not a straight line, but rather a fluid and ever-changing force that moves in a cyclical pattern. The ancient belief that the present, past, and future are intertwined in a non-linear fashion at this sacred site has sparked numerous debates and discussions among researchers as some see it as a sign of the interconnectedness of all things, while others view it as a symbol of the eternal and unchanging nature of the divine. Regardless of one's interpretation, “the Fig Tree of the Temples” remains a powerful symbol of the complex and mysterious nature of temporal concepts itself.

The results of this research are useful in examining and analyzing conceptual metaphors of temporal concepts in poetry and prose texts, and its research method can be used to examine the coherence of texts from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. On the other hand, those interested in discovering conceptual metaphors of temporal concepts in religious texts can also classify the mappings used in these texts and discover the aesthetic characteristics of these texts. The practical results of this research are useful in teaching linguistic concepts and conceptual metaphors to students of Persian literature and linguistics.

Although two experts in linguistics categorized the temporal concepts metaphorical concepts in the novel, there were some limitations regarding the overlapping eras of temporal concepts in the primary and secondary metaphors of temporal concepts. The primary metaphors may have been more straightforward and easier to categorize, while the secondary metaphors may have been more complex and intertwined, making it difficult to clearly distinguish between them. Additionally, the limitations addressed the type of mappings that were multidimensional regarding the semantic and pragmatic meanings. This suggests that the relationship between temporal concepts and their metaphorical representations may be more intricate and nuanced than initially thought. It is possible that future research may uncover these areas of inquiry and help readers arrive at a more solid understanding of temporal concepts in Mahmoud’s novel or other similar literary works. By delving deeper into the complexities of temporal concepts metaphors, future researchers may gain a deeper appreciation for how language shapes our perceptions of temporal concepts and reality.

Data Availability Statement

Data available on request from the authors .

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Ethical considerations

The study was approved by the University officials and the department of Research Affairs. The authors avoided from data fabrication and falsification. Data were collected based on the guidelines of the supervisor and advisors.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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