

**THE ROLE OF TEMPORAL MARKERS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF  
NARRATIVES IN JOHN STEINBECK'S "THE GRAPES OF WRATH" AND IN  
ANAR RZAYEV'S "THE SIXTH FLOOR OF THE FIVE STOREY BUILDING"**

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**Ключевые слова:** *темпоральные маркеры, временная последовательность, художественное время, временная организация текста*

Temporal markers are the words that indicate when something happens, for how long, how frequently, or in what sequence in a series of events. They narrate and allow writer and reader to be present together for the passage of time moment by moment. If we had no temporal markers, we would not have any idea when things happen and how they stand in relation to each other in time, so we would become confused and coherence would be lost.

**The role of Temporal Markers**

Temporal markers have many forms. Time point markers initially mention specific times, e.g., "yesterday", "at 5 PM", "in 1995", or "on Monday" which indicate to the reader a very definite suggestion of when something happened. Secondly, they employ duration indicators to explain the length of time it takes for something to happen through phrases such as "for two hours", "since Monday", or "all through the night", that help indicate duration of action or state. Third, sequence markers show the order of events, e.g., "first", "next", "then", "afterwards", and "finally". They are very convenient in narration as they enable the events to take chronological and logical order. Finally, we have relative time indicators, which express time with reference to the present moment or some other event. They are words like "now", "soon", "already", "yet", and "just". One example is where "already" implies an action has been done prior to its meant occurrence, and "yet" implies something meant to have happened didn't do so within a specified time frame. Temporal markers in narrative not only position action along a time line but also conduct emotional pacing, create suspense or anticipation, and even accomplish a character's mental state in temporal perspective shifts [1]. Temporal indicators are typically required in creating a logical, coherent, and significant narrative framework.

In addition to their basic role of indicating time for things, temporal markers perform additional linguist and communicative roles that are vital in written and spoken language. In addition to expressing existence of something, they also organize information content, provide for overall coherence, clarity, and understandability of the message. [2] Temporal adverbs are working in close interaction with tense and grammatical aspect to form an integrated view of temporal relationships. Time words such as "yesterday", "tomorrow", or "now", for example,

will most likely be preceded by some use of the verb tenses to indicate a particular point in time, and words such as “for two hours” or “since morning” will most likely be followed by perfect or progressive aspect to indicate duration or continuity. Temporal expressions have significant pragmatic functions in discourse since speakers are controlling turn-taking, topic progression, and addressee attention management. For instance, the use of “then what happened?” or “just now” in conversation sustains temporal ordering for explanation or storytelling. Use and use of temporal markers are, furthermore, quite varied both language-to-language and culture-to-culture and thus a subject of study owing to need to comparative linguists, translation studies scholars, and second language acquisition theorists. They are thus pivotal to the construction of cohesive, coherent, and interesting texts.

### **Temporal Markers in The Grapes of Wrath**

Steinbeck employs a profusion of temporal markers in *The Grapes of Wrath* to create narrative momentum, express states of mind, and underscore thematic concerns with conflict and displacement. Temporal sequence is established through temporal adverbials guiding the reader chronologically through the Joads' trek, e.g., “One morning...”, “The next day...”, and “After a week of traveling...” [3, s. 118]. These words connect events in time and suggest continuity and effort on the part of the family's journey. Verb tense is also involved in temporal coherence; Steinbeck uses the simple past tense predominantly but frequently switches to the past perfect in describing reflective events, such as “She had known the child would die” [3, s. 445], which is more effective in evoking pathos of the event and revealing the interiority of the character psychologically. Temporal indicators also shift in the intercalary chapters, in which Steinbeck often uses the present tense, e.g., “Highway 66 is the main migrant road. 66-the long concrete path across the country” [3, s. 117], to establish a timelessness and sense of immediacy beyond that of the Joads' particular experience. Temporal allusions to seasonal change, such as “The last rains came gently, and they did not cut the scarred earth” [3, s. 3], highlight the farm cycle and the characters' dependence on the land. Steinbeck controls time in narrative pace through compression and dilation. Symbolic temporal phrases are also used throughout the novel, such as “In the beginning...” and “Every day the dust came” [3, s. 6], to create mythic, iterative, or apocalyptic tones that are suitable to Steinbeck's broader social critique. While basically linear, the novel achieves temporal layering by flashback and recollection on the part of characters, most often prefaced by “He remembered when...” or “Back in Oklahoma...” [3, s. 157], adding to character inner lives and histories. Temporal markers in dialogue, lastly, serve a double function-plot development and sociolect marking. Such utterances as “We'll get there in a couple days”, “Wasn't like that back in '28”, and “Someday this'll all be over” [3, s. 193–210] both express characters' level of socioeconomic status and indicate time as it is felt within a framework of uncertainty, nostalgia, and optimism. These uses of time are parallel to what Genette [4] classifies as order, duration, and frequency, while Todorov [5] and Fludernik [6] would attempt to emphasize the synchrony between story time and discourse time. Steinbeck's markers of time build cumulatively not only the time logic of the narrative but also emphasize the psychological toll of migration and social-historical context of the Dust Bowl era.

### **Temporal Markers in The Sixth Floor of the Five Storey Building**

In *The Sixth Floor of the Five Storey Building*, Anar interlaces temporal signifiers into the story of the novel to demonstrate the psychological disintegration of the hero as well as the

overall socio-cultural transformations of Azerbaijani society. These signifiers are not so much chronology's convenient tools but narrative techniques that are helping to layer the story thematically and emotionally. By Genette's [4] anachrony theory, Anar often violates linearity of narrative to activate retrospection and memory through terms like "O gün." and "Sonra." [7, s. 12] as a signal of the transition into past events which are emotionally significant. Through retrospective breaks, the reader is made privy to the underlying planes of the protagonist's inner world. Temporal convention designed to reify itself through habit sentences like "Hər səhər." and "Axşamlar." [7, s. 28–30], which would be recognized as mimetic time markers by Fludernik [6], placing the character in daily routines that iterate the boredom and affective blockage of his life. Similarly, "İllər əvvəl." [7, s. 45] employs a nostalgic and affective temporality, tracing the character's affective loss and the permeability of memory.

Anar also employs repeated immediate temporal signals like "Bu gün.", "İndi.", and "Bir-dən." [7, s. 60–65] to generate story immediacy and emotional tension, adhering to Chatman's [8] differentiation between story time and discourse time. These signals also serve to anchor the reader in the time of action as well as to indicate psychological transformation. Internal reflection will typically employ conditional and hypothetical structures, such as "O vaxtlar mən..." and "Əgər o gün bunu desəydim..." [7, s. 88], conveying the protagonist's guilt and inner conflict what Palmer [9] would refer to as expressions of an imaginary mind grappling with time and choice. As a result, through consistent and diverse manipulation of temporal cues, Anar builds a complicated story in which time is a formal device, but also an operating force in shaping both character and signification.

### **Comparative Discussion**

In spite of the cultural and linguistic differences in Steinbeck's and Anar's works, both novels illustrate how temporal markers are crucial in constructing meaning in narrative. Temporal markers in *The Grapes of Wrath* form social commentary and historical realism by situating events in actual measurable time. Temporal markers in *The Sixth Floor of the Five Storey Building* are subjective so that the reader can experience time based on the emotions of the character. Both Steinbeck and Anar use flashbacks and flashforwards, but Steinbeck to create context and tension, and Anar to symbolize regret and memory.

**Relevance of the topic.** Time continues to be a privileged theme in contemporary literary and linguistic theory. An examination of temporal markers in narrative discourses indicates how writers organize human experience, create memory, and communicate ideology. Our knowledge as readers of character motivation, plot continuity, and emotional engagement is linked to the organization of time in the text. In a world that is more and more history-conscious, trauma-conscious, and memory-conscious, the analysis of temporal markers sheds light on how literature opens up and seizes time.

**Scientific novelty of the article.** While Steinbeck's social commentary and Anar's introspective novel have extensively been examined, nothing is known of the specific linguistic function of temporal markers within their narrative frameworks. This paper conducts comparative analysis of temporal structures to illustrate how time is differently constructed, lived in an alternate manner, and recalled differently in the two novels. It also interweaves Western and Eastern narrative traditions based on temporality as a filter.

**Practical significance and application of the article.** The findings of this research are applied for the benefit of literary critics, linguists, and educators. Educators may use temporal constructs in such novels to instruct their students on the structure of narration and cultural rendering of time. The article is also a formula for analyzing time in other books. For writers and translators, awareness of markers of time enhances narrative coherence as well as readers' interest.

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### Con Steynbekin “The Grapes of Wrath” və Anar Rzayevin “Beş mərtəbəli evin altıncı mərtəbəsi” əsərlərində temporal markerlərin hekayə quruluşunda rolu Xülasə

Məqalədə temporativ markerlərin bədii mətnlərin quruluşunda və inkişafında oynadığı rol tədqiq olunur. Tədqiqat John Steinbeckin *Qəzəb Salxımları* və Anar Rzayevin *Beşmərtəbəli Evin Altıncı Mərtəbəsi* əsərləri üzərində aparılmışdır. Genette, Fludernik və Chatman kimi nəzəriyyəçilərin naratoloji yanaşmalarına əsaslanan araşdırma zamanı zaman ifadələrinin – zərflər, fel zamanları və xronoloji göstəricilər kimi – narrativin ardıcılığına, struktur bütövlüyünə və personajların qavranılmasına təsiri araşdırılmışdır. Təhlil göstərir ki, Steinbeck ardıcıl və irəliləyən zaman strukturlarından istifadə edərək Joad ailəsinin sosial-iqtisadi mübarizələrini əks etdirir, Anarın mətnində isə zaman dəyişmələri daha parçalı və düşüncəlidir, daxili vəziyyətlərə və psixoloji dərinliyə önəm verilir. Müqayisə nəticəsində qərb və Azərbaycan ədəbiyyatlarında temporativ quruluşun mədəni və üslubi xüsusiyyətləri önə çıxarılır. Məqalə göstərir ki, temporativ markerlər mətnin zaman quruluşunu və oxucunun yaddaş və zaman qavrayışını formalaşdırmaqda mühüm vasitədir.

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**“Роль темпоральных маркеров в построении повествования в романе Джона Стейнбека «Гроздь гнева» и повести Анара Рзаева «Шестой этаж пятиэтажного дома»”**

**Резюме**

В данной статье исследуется роль темпоральных маркеров в построении и развитии художественного повествования на примере романа Джона Стейнбека *Гроздь гнева* и повести Анара Рзаева *Шестой этаж пятиэтажного дома*. Основываясь на наратологических теориях Жене, Флудерник и Чатмена, в работе анализируется, как языковые средства выражения времени — такие как наречия, временные формы глаголов и хронологические указания — способствуют связности повествования, последовательности событий и восприятию персонажей. Анализ показывает, что Стейнбек преимущественно использует линейную и прогрессивную временную структуру, отражающую социально-экономические трудности семьи Джоад, в то время как повествование Анара характеризуется фрагментарными и рефлексивными временными переходами, подчеркивающими внутренние состояния и психологическую глубину. Сравнение выявляет культурные и стилистические особенности темпоральной организации в западной и азербайджанской литературных традициях. Таким образом, статья демонстрирует, что темпоральные маркеры являются ключевыми элементами в формировании читательского восприятия времени, памяти и хода повествования.

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