



## The Role of Some Individual Differences in Metaphorical Comprehension of Time in Persian: A Cognitive Approach

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most fundamental and vague human experiences that forms part of the complexity and richness of language is the "time". Time alone cannot be understood and experienced. Therefore, it is understood and experienced in the context of the "space". When thinking or talking about time, this is often done through two perspectives: Moving Ego Metaphor and Moving Time Metaphor. From the Moving Ego perspective, time is constant and the observer moves towards time. But in Moving Time perspective, time is understood as moving, and the observer is constant. The people's perspective of time is determined by vague questions. Various researches have shown that some differences between individuals may influence the choice of a person's time perspective. The purpose of this research is to investigate the role of some individual differences in the metaphorical comprehension of time in Persian. These differences include lifestyle differences (students versus university staff), procrastination, conscientiousness and extroversion. In this regard, the present study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between Persian-speaking staff and university students in the metaphorical comprehension of the time statement of *the next Wednesday's meeting*?
2. Does the procrastination and conscientiousness of people affect the metaphorical comprehension of the time statement of *the next Wednesday's meeting* in Persian language?
3. Does the extroversion of people affect the metaphorical comprehension of the time statement of *the next Wednesday's meeting* in Persian language?

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## 2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

### Participants

#### *Experiment 1*

The statistical population of Experiment 1 consisted of 234 Persian-speaking staff and students from the University of Sistan and Baluchestan. The reason for the selection of undergraduate students and staff at the University of Sistan and Baluchestan was their availability. 112 of the population were the staff members and 122 of them were students. The age of the staff was 28- 58 years old and the average age was 37 years. The age of the students was between 19 and 35, with an average age of 27.

#### *Experiment 2*

The statistical population of Experiment 2 included 102 undergraduate students of Sistan and Baluchestan University. The reason for the selection of undergraduate students in this study was their availability. 55 of participants were men and 47 participants were female. The age of the subjects was between 19 and 32 years and the average age was 24 years.

#### *Experiment 3*

The statistical population of this Experiment comprised 84 undergraduate students of Sistan and Baluchestan University. The reason for the selection of undergraduate students in this study was their availability. 36 participants were male and 48 were female. The age of the subjects was between 19 and 30 years and the average age was 23 years.

For this end, following Duffy and Feist's (2014) three experiments were designed based on the ambiguous question of *Wednesday's meeting* of McGlone and Harding (1998). In the first experiment, the ambiguous question *Wednesday's meeting* was distributed between the two groups of students and staff. For the second experiment, a three-part questionnaire was submitted to the participants. The first part of the questionnaire included participants' demographic information such as age, gender, native language, nationality, occupation, and education level. For the second part of the questionnaire, the students' procrastination was measured through Tuckman's (1991) questionnaire. Students' conscientiousness also was measured by 10 statements (5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, and 60) of NEO questionnaire. Finally, the ambiguous question of *Wednesday's meeting* of McGlone and Harding (1998) was given to the participants. In the third experiment, a four-part questionnaire was used. The first part of the questionnaire included demographic information about age, gender, native language, nationality, occupation and level of education. For the second part of the questionnaire, the participants completed an acceptability judgment task consisting of six pairs of time statements. These six sentences were designed in the form of a questionnaire. These sentences include either a Moving Ego Metaphor or Moving Time Metaphor (such as "We are approaching Nowruz"), or Moving Time Metaphor (such as "Nowruz is approaching"). In the third part of the questionnaire, the participants' extroversion rate was calculated using 12 terms (2, 7, 12, 27, 32, 37, 42, 47, 52, and 57) of NEO questionnaire. The last part of the questionnaire included the ambiguous question of *Wednesday's meeting* of McGlone & Harding (1998).

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of these three experiments were analyzed by Chi-square and independent t-test. The results showed that there is a relationship between the research variables

as follow: (1) There is a significant difference between the university students and staff in Persian language in the metaphorical comprehension of the time statement of the ambiguous question of *Wednesday's meeting*. Consequently, it can be said that staff participants are more likely to choose Monday's response. While student participants are more likely to choose Friday's response. (2) The procrastination and conscientiousness of Persian speakers has a significant effect on the understanding of the metaphorical comprehension of the time statement of the ambiguous question of *Wednesday's meeting*.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that those participants who show greater conscientiousness are willing to adopt a Time Moving Perspective (Monday's response). And (3) extroversion of Persian speakers has a significant effect on the understanding of the metaphorical comprehension of the time statement of the ambiguous question of *Wednesday's meeting*. Accordingly, it can be said that extroversion people tend to choose Ego Moving Perspective (Friday's response).

**Keywords:** Individual Differences; Metaphor; Moving Ego Metaphor; Moving Time Metaphor; Time