

**THE PAST SIMPLE TENSE IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR: A COMPARATIVE ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF MAJOR PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES****Ahmedov Azimjon***teacher of Andijan State Institute of Foreign Languages.*

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**Annotation:** *This article presents a comparative and analytical study of the Past Simple tense in English grammar based on the perspectives of leading pedagogical grammarians, including Raymond Murphy, Betty Schramper Azar, Michael Swan, as well as Oxford and Cambridge grammar traditions. The paper examines how the Past Simple tense is conceptualized in terms of form, meaning, and use, with particular attention to time reference, aspectual meaning, and pedagogical presentation. By analyzing these approaches sequentially, the study identifies both shared principles and methodological differences. The findings underline the importance of combining formal accuracy with contextual and communicative interpretation in the teaching and learning of the Past Simple tense. The article concludes with generalizations relevant to grammar instruction and applied linguistics research.*

**Key words:** *Past Simple tense, simple past, English grammar, tense and time reference, pedagogical grammar, Murphy, Azar, Swan, Oxford, Cambridge*

**Annotatsiya:** *Ushbu maqola ingliz tili grammatikasidagi Past Simple zamonini yetakchi pedagogik grammatikachilar — Raymond Murphy, Betty Schramper Azar, Michael Swan hamda Oxford va Cambridge grammatika an'analari qarashlari asosida qiyosiy va tahliliy tarzda o'rganadi. Maqolada Past Simple zamonining shakli, ma'nosi va qo'llanilishi qanday talqin qilinishi, xususan, zamoniy bog'lanish, aspektual ma'no va pedagogik taqdimotga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Ushbu yondashuvlarni ketma-ket tahlil qilish orqali umumiy tamoyillar va metodologik farqlar aniqlanadi. Natijalar Past Simple zamonini o'qitish va o'rganishda grammatik aniqlikni kontekstual va kommunikativ talqin bilan uyg'unlashtirish muhimligini ko'rsatadi. Maqola grammatika o'qitish va amaliy tilshunoslik tadqiqotlari uchun ahamiyatli bo'lgan umumiy xulosalar bilan yakunlanadi.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *Past Simple zamon, oddiy o'tmish zamon, ingliz tili grammatikasi, zamon va vaqt munosabati, pedagogik grammatika, Murphy, Azar, Swan, Oxford, Cambridge.*

**Аннотация:** В данной статье представлен сравнительно-аналитический анализ времени *Past Simple* в английской грамматике на основе взглядов ведущих специалистов по педагогической грамматике, включая Реймонда Мёрфи, Бетти Шрампфер Азар, Майкла Свона, а также грамматические традиции *Oxford* и *Cambridge*. В работе рассматривается, как время *Past Simple* концептуализируется с точки зрения формы, значения и употребления, с особым акцентом на временную соотнесённость, аспектуальное значение и педагогическую подачу материала. Последовательный анализ данных подходов позволяет выявить как общие принципы, так и методологические различия. Полученные результаты подчеркивают важность сочетания формальной точности с контекстуальной и коммуникативной интерпретацией в процессе обучения и изучения времени *Past Simple*. Статья завершается обобщениями, имеющими значение для преподавания грамматики и исследований в области прикладной лингвистики.

**Ключевые слова:** *Время Past Simple, простое прошедшее время, грамматика английского языка, категория времени и временная соотнесённость, педагогическая грамматика, Murphy, Azar, Swan, Oxford, Cambridge.*

The Past Simple tense is one of the most fundamental grammatical structures in English and is usually introduced at the early stages of language learning. Despite its apparent simplicity, learners often encounter difficulties related to irregular verb forms, time reference, and distinctions between completed past actions and present relevance. For this reason, the Past Simple tense has been widely discussed in pedagogical grammar. This article aims to analyze how major grammar authorities conceptualize and present the Past Simple tense, highlighting both theoretical interpretations and teaching-oriented strategies.

### **Murphy’s Form-Oriented and Practical Perspective**

Raymond Murphy’s *English Grammar in Use* treats the Past Simple tense as the primary grammatical tool for describing completed actions in the past. Murphy emphasizes clarity and accessibility, presenting the tense through simple rules supported by everyday examples. According to Murphy, the defining feature of the Past Simple is that the action is finished and located at a specific time in the past, whether that time is explicitly stated or implied.

Murphy systematically contrasts the Past Simple with the Present Perfect, a distinction that learners frequently find challenging. From his perspective, the Past Simple is used when the speaker is concerned with when an action happened rather than with its present result. This approach reflects Murphy’s learner-centered methodology, where grammatical understanding is achieved through pattern recognition and repeated exposure.

### **Azar’s Time-Reference and Instructional Framework**

Betty Schramper Azar’s Fundamentals of English Grammar offers a more structured and instructional analysis of the Past Simple tense. Azar places strong emphasis on the concept of time reference, explicitly stating that the Past Simple is used for actions that began and ended in the past. Her explanations are frequently accompanied by timelines and charts, which visually represent the relationship between grammatical form and temporal meaning.

Azar also highlights the narrative function of the Past Simple, noting that it is the primary tense used in storytelling and historical description. Unlike Murphy’s concise explanations, Azar encourages learners to consciously analyze verb forms, particularly the distinction between regular and irregular verbs. Her approach reflects a pedagogical philosophy that values explicit instruction and cognitive awareness.

### **Swan’s Analytical and Usage-Based Interpretation**

Michael Swan’s Practical English Usage provides a more analytical and descriptive account of the Past Simple tense. Swan focuses on usage rules, exceptions, and common learner errors, making his work particularly valuable for advanced learners and teachers. He explains that the Past Simple is not defined solely by past time, but by the idea of completed events seen as whole units.

Swan also addresses problematic areas such as the use of the Past Simple in conditional clauses, reported speech, and polite expressions. By examining incorrect forms and explaining why they are unacceptable, Swan contributes to a deeper understanding of grammatical accuracy. His approach situates the Past Simple within a broader system of tense and aspect in English.

### **Oxford and Cambridge: Contextual and Communicative Approaches**

Oxford and Cambridge grammar traditions combine descriptive grammar with communicative language teaching principles. Their materials often present the Past Simple in meaningful contexts, such as personal narratives, news reports, and dialogues. Rather than isolating the tense as a set of rules, these resources emphasize how it functions in real communication.

Oxford grammar sources highlight the role of time adverbials such as yesterday, last year, and in 2010, reinforcing the link between the Past Simple and definite past time. Cambridge materials, meanwhile, focus on contrasts between the Past Simple and other past forms, particularly the Past Continuous and Present Perfect. This integrated approach supports both accuracy and fluency.

### **Comparative Analysis of Approaches**

A comparative analysis of these perspectives reveals several shared principles. All scholars agree that the Past Simple is used for completed actions in the past and that time

reference plays a crucial role in its usage. However, their methodological priorities differ. Murphy emphasizes simplicity and learner autonomy, Azar focuses on explicit instruction and visual support, Swan prioritizes analytical precision, and Oxford and Cambridge promote contextualized and communicative learning.

These differences reflect broader trends in applied linguistics, ranging from form-focused instruction to usage-based and communicative approaches. Together, they offer a comprehensive understanding of the Past Simple tense.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The analysis suggests that effective teaching of the Past Simple tense requires an integrated approach. Learners benefit from clear explanations of form, explicit attention to time reference, awareness of common errors, and exposure to authentic contexts. Relying on a single pedagogical model may limit learners' understanding, whereas combining multiple approaches can enhance both accuracy and communicative competence.

### **General Conclusions**

In conclusion, the Past Simple tense, while seemingly straightforward, represents a complex interaction between grammatical form, temporal meaning, and discourse function. The comparative analysis of Murphy, Azar, Swan, and Oxford and Cambridge traditions demonstrates that no single approach fully captures this complexity. Instead, a balanced integration of structural, analytical, and communicative perspectives provides the most effective framework for both teaching and research. The study of the Past Simple tense thus remains a valuable area within applied linguistics and grammar pedagogy.

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