

THE PRESENT SIMPLE TENSE IN ENGLISH: A SCIENTIFIC AND ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Abstract: *The Present Simple tense is one of the most fundamental and frequently used tense forms in the . It functions as a core grammatical structure for expressing habitual actions, general truths, states, and fixed schedules. Despite its apparent simplicity, the Present Simple tense presents significant challenges for language learners due to subject–verb agreement rules, the use of auxiliary verbs, and its wide range of semantic and pragmatic functions. This article provides a scientific and analytical examination of the Present Simple tense, focusing on its grammatical form, usage, syntactic properties, semantic roles, and pedagogical significance. Drawing on established grammatical theories and research in language teaching, the study identifies common learner difficulties and discusses effective instructional strategies for mastering the Present Simple tense in English language education.*

Keywords: *Present Simple tense, English grammar, subject–verb agreement, habitual actions, auxiliary verbs, language teaching, syntax*

Annotatsiya: *Hozirgi oddiy zamon (Present Simple) ingliz tilidagi eng asosiy va eng ko‘p qo‘llaniladigan zamon shakllaridan biridir. U odatiy harakatlar, umumiy haqiqatlar, holatlar hamda qat’iy belgilangan jadval va rejalarining ifodalanishida asosiy grammatik tuzilma sifatida xizmat qiladi. Tashqi tomondan sodda ko‘rinsada, Present Simple zamoni ega–kesim moslashuvi qoidalari, yordamchi fe’llarning qo‘llanilishi hamda semantik va pragmatik funksiyalarining keng doirasi sababli til o‘rganuvchilar uchun sezilarli qiyinchiliklarni yuzaga keltiradi. Ushbu maqolada Present Simple zamoni ilmiy-tahliliy jihatdan o‘rganilib, uning grammatik shakli, qo‘llanilishi, sintaktik xususiyatlari, semantik rollari va pedagogik ahamiyati tahlil qilinadi. Grammatika nazariyalari va til o‘qitish sohasidagi ilmiy tadqiqotlarga tayangan holda, tadqiqotda o‘quvchilarda uchraydigan keng tarqalgan muammolar aniqlanib, Present Simple zamonini samarali o‘zlashtirishga xizmat qiluvchi o‘qitish strategiyalari muhokama qilinadi.*

Kalit soʻzlar: *Present Simple zamoni, ingliz tili grammatikasi, ega–kesim moslashuvi, odatiy harakatlar, yordamchi fe'llar, til o'qitish, sintaksis*

Аннотация: *Настоящее простое время (Present Simple) является одной из самых основных и часто используемых временных форм в английском языке. Оно функционирует как ключевая грамматическая структура для выражения привычных действий, общих истин, состояний и фиксированных расписаний. Несмотря на кажущуюся простоту, время Present Simple представляет значительные трудности для изучающих язык из-за правил согласования подлежащего и сказуемого, использования вспомогательных глаголов и широкого спектра семантических и прагматических функций. В данной статье проводится научно-аналитическое исследование времени Present Simple с акцентом на его грамматическую форму, употребление, синтаксические свойства, семантические роли и педагогическую значимость. Опираясь на устоявшиеся грамматические теории и исследования в области преподавания языков, в работе выявляются типичные трудности обучающихся и рассматриваются эффективные методические стратегии для овладения временем Present Simple в процессе обучения английскому языку.*

Ключевые слова: *Настоящее простое время, английская грамматика, согласование подлежащего и сказуемого, привычные действия, вспомогательные глаголы, обучение языку, синтаксис*

The Present Simple tense occupies a central position in the grammatical system of the English language due to its high frequency and functional versatility. Linguists and grammarians consistently emphasize that the Present Simple is not merely a tense used to describe actions happening at the present moment, but rather a grammatical form that expresses generality, regularity, permanence, and factual meaning. According to Swan (2016), the Present Simple should be understood as a “timeless tense” that often transcends specific temporal reference.

From a morphological perspective, the Present Simple tense is characterized by minimal inflection. With the exception of the third person singular, verbs appear in their base form. The addition of the -s or -es ending in the third person singular (works, teaches, studies) represents one of the few inflectional markers in modern English. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) argue that this limited morphology contrasts sharply with the extensive communicative functions of the tense, making it deceptively complex for learners.

One of the primary functions of the Present Simple tense is the expression of habitual and repeated actions. Sentences such as “She reads every evening” or “They attend lectures on Mondays” illustrate how the tense encodes actions that occur regularly over time. These

habitual meanings are frequently reinforced by adverbs of frequency such as always, usually, often, and never. Linguistically, this usage reflects an unbounded temporal interpretation, where actions are viewed as part of a stable pattern rather than as isolated events.

Another major function of the Present Simple is the expression of general truths and universally valid facts. This includes scientific laws, mathematical principles, and commonly accepted facts, for example, “Water boils at 100°C” or “The sun rises in the east.” Eastwood (1994) notes that this function is particularly prominent in academic and scientific discourse, where the Present Simple contributes to an objective and authoritative tone by presenting information as stable and enduring.

The Present Simple tense is also commonly used with stative verbs that describe mental states, emotions, possession, perception, and relationships. Verbs such as know, believe, like, own, and seem typically occur in the Present Simple because they describe conditions rather than actions. Swan (2016) explains that these verbs resist progressive forms, as they do not denote dynamic or temporary activities. This distinction between stative and dynamic verbs poses a conceptual challenge for many learners and often results in errors such as “I am knowing” or “She is liking the book.”

Syntactically, the Present Simple relies on auxiliary verbs to form negative and interrogative sentences. The auxiliary verbs do and does are used to mark negation and questions, as in “They do not understand the rule” and “Does he live nearby?”. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (2016) emphasize that this auxiliary-based system reflects the analytical nature of English grammar. However, learners frequently struggle with this structure, producing errors such as double marking (“She doesn’t understands”) or omission of the auxiliary (“She not understand”).

Subject–verb agreement is another critical feature of the Present Simple tense. In affirmative sentences, verbs must agree with the subject in number and person. The third person singular -s ending is one of the most persistent sources of grammatical error in second language acquisition. Ellis (2008) explains that this difficulty arises because the -s marker has low perceptual salience and limited communicative impact, leading learners to overlook it. Nevertheless, in formal writing and academic contexts, incorrect agreement is considered a serious grammatical flaw.

Semantically, the Present Simple conveys meanings related to general validity and certainty rather than immediate time reference. This explains its frequent use in describing schedules and timetables, such as “The class starts at nine” or “The train leaves at six.” Although these statements refer to future events, the Present Simple is used because the

events are fixed and predictable. Murphy (2019) highlights that this usage underscores the tense’s association with regularity and factual certainty.

From a pedagogical perspective, the Present Simple is usually the first tense introduced to learners of English. However, Ur (2012) argues that effective instruction should go beyond simple rule memorization. Learners need opportunities to use the tense in meaningful and communicative contexts, such as describing daily routines, conducting surveys, and writing factual descriptions. Such activities help learners internalize both the form and function of the Present Simple.

In academic and professional communication, the Present Simple plays a crucial role. It is commonly used to describe research aims, summarize existing knowledge, and present general conclusions, as in “This article examines...” or “Previous studies indicate...”. Huddleston and Pullum (2002) note that this usage situates academic writing within an ongoing discourse and emphasizes the relevance and continuity of research.

In conclusion, the Present Simple tense is a foundational component of English grammar that extends far beyond its seemingly simple structure. It serves a wide range of grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic functions, including the expression of habitual actions, general truths, states, and fixed schedules. Despite its basic form, the tense presents persistent challenges for language learners, particularly in the areas of subject–verb agreement and auxiliary verb usage. Linguistic research and pedagogical studies demonstrate that a comprehensive understanding of the Present Simple is essential for achieving grammatical accuracy and communicative competence. Through systematic instruction and meaningful practice, learners can successfully master the Present Simple tense and use it effectively in academic, professional, and everyday communication.

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