

HOW TO TEACH THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRESENT PERFECT AND PAST SIMPLE IN THE 11TH GRADE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This research paper explores an experimental approach to enhance the effective teaching of present perfect and past simple, aiming to avoid confusion between the two tenses in communication. The study was conducted with 11th-grade students at School N2 in Kasansay, Namangan. The paper provides guidance for instructing these tenses and offers suitable worksheets for students. Over a week, 10 students received topic-based gap filling handouts, and their daily results were recorded in a table. Notably, each student demonstrated noticeable improvement in utilizing both tenses in their communication. ESL teachers are recommended to adopt the instructions outlined in this paper to enhance their students' grammar skills, particularly in mastering present perfect and past simple.

Keywords: topic-based worksheets, students, confusion, tenses, observation, difference, ESL teachers, explanation, discussion, communication, questionnaire.

INTRODUCTION

Tenses in English language demonstrate the time of an action in a sentence usually performed by or centered around the subject of the sentence. Although it's quite common, the present perfect is one of the most difficult English verb tenses. Mostly, students are confused to use present perfect and past simple.

When present perfect appeared in the high-school curriculum, there seemed no end of questions about what it meant, how it was used, why it was used with certain adverbs, whether it was "really" a past or present tense, and how long the "recent past" was anyway. It was a challenge to explain why native speakers prefer / have stayed here five years to the eminently rational I stay here five years when the logic of a "persistent situation" (Comrie, 1985) is self-evident for many learners.

Although several researches are done to compare the usage of present perfect and past simple tenses properly, pedagogically there are still several difficulties such as when choosing the present perfect and past simple in discussing past events and overusing present perfect when past simple is more appropriate.

This research paper sets out to answer to the following questions:

1. What is the difference between present perfect and past simple?
2. Why do my students make mistakes or get confused to use these tenses?
3. Effective techniques to solve the problems while using these tenses.

In order to conduct data for this research paper, several research based surveys are done such as Google form questionnaires, lesson observation, grammar tasks for students and group discussion among colleagues. This research paper first discusses usage of present perfect and past simple tenses then goes on with problems teaching them and its relevant solutions.

Methodology

This research was prepared according to the procedure used by YoungEun Yoon(2012).Traditionally, having difficulties in using present perfect and past simple has been assessed by measuring students' knowledge to distinguish the differences between two tenses and to use them in a appropriate situation. To test our primary hypothesis, we conducted that by doing following actions, teachers accomplish to teach present perfect and past simple clearly:

1. **Clear explanations**

Provide clear and concise explanations of the rules and usage of each tense. Highlight the key differences between them.

2. **Practice exercises**

Create exercises that specifically target the use of present perfect and past simple. This can include gap-filling exercises, sentence rewriting, or creating their own sentences.

3. **Feedback**

Provide constructive feedback on students' usage of the tenses. Correct any errors and explain why a particular tense is more appropriate in a given context.

The design was a mixed-method study as the online questionnaire for ESL teachers and giving different gap filling worksheets for chosen students. Observations were conducted at school N2 with 11th grade students in Kasansay, Namangan. Criteria for selecting the subjects were as follows: 11th grade students at school N2 had several difficulties while using these two tenses and mostly they confused present perfect and past simple in communication. A research study was conducted in the 11 A class in Kasansay which is situated in the centre of the town. The participants included 10 ESL teachers from public schools in Kasansay, Namangan. Selection was voluntary, with teachers invited to fill out an online questionnaire if interested. For students, 10th, and 11th graders at school N2 in Kasansay centre were asked about their willingness to participate, and only the students of 11 A agreed to take part. A random sample of English teachers was requested to answer the online questionnaire related to teaching present perfect and past simple, topic based handouts were contributed to the selected

students. The researcher captured a video of the selected class while teaching present perfect and past simple to identify any shortcomings in their methodology. Data consists of Google survey including 5 problem-based questions by 10 ESL teachers, worksheets for the 11th grade students. The first step in this process involved providing a comprehensive, step-by-step explanation of the rules, usage, and key terms associated with both the present perfect and past simple tenses:

The present perfect tense expresses actions that occurred at an indefinite time in the past, with a focus on their relevance to the present. It is formed by combining the present tense of “have” with the past participle of the main verb.

Usage: 1. Completed Actions: Use the present perfect to describe actions that have been completed at an unspecified time in the past.

Example: She has visited Paris.

2. Experiences: Express life experiences using the present perfect.

Example: I have never tried sushi.

3. Changes Over Time: Use the present perfect to convey changes or developments that have taken place over a period leading up to the present.

Example: The city has grown significantly in the last decade.

4. Actions Relevant to the Present: Highlight actions that have a connection to the present moment.

Example: I can't go out; I've already made plans.

5. Unfinished Time Periods: Use the present perfect with “since” or “for” to discuss actions or situations that started in the past and continue into the present.

Example: They have been friends since childhood.

6. Recently Completed Actions: Express actions that have just been completed.

Example: She has just finished reading the book.

Signal words: already, just, ever, never, yet, since, for.

The past simple tense is used to describe completed actions or events in the past. It's often used with specific time expressions, such as yesterday, last week, or in 1990. Additionally, it is used for a series of completed actions or events in the past. Keep in mind that the past simple does not indicate the duration of an action; it simply states that the action is finished.

Usage: 1. Single Completed Action: It is commonly used for a single completed action in the past.

Example: “She finished her book last night.”

2. Habits or Routines in the Past: When describing habitual actions or routines that occurred in the past.

Example: "He always went for a run in the morning."

3. Sequential Events: It is used to narrate a sequence of events in the past. Each action is expressed in the past simple.

Example: “She entered the room, smiled, and sat down.”

4. Reported Speech: When reporting statements or events that someone else has said.

Example: “She said she enjoyed the movie.”

5. Past Facts or Generalizations: When stating facts or general truths that were true in the past.

Example: “The Titanic sank in 1912.”

Signal words: yesterday, last week/month/year..., in March/2020/etc, two days ago/a month ago.

In the process of explaining the specific two tenses, the researcher recorded a video of the lesson, reviewing it multiple times to identify any mistakes in the teaching methods employed for those topics. After explanations, within a week selected students received various gap filling worksheets related to these topics(See Appendix 1). After the task was completed, paper sheets were collected and checked on their own as self-evaluation aids them in discovering their mistakes. Daily data was collected and recorded in the table. In the following stage of the research, collecting input through an online questionnaire specifically from ESL teachers in Namangan. The focus was on understanding the difficulties they encounter while teaching two tenses. The entirety of the data was collected, organized into diagrams and included in the results section.

While teaching grammar to the 11th grade students, it became evident that the students in class 11 A had trouble to differentiate present perfect and past simple. They also faced difficulties using these in their communication. Data management and analysis were performed using Google form questionnaire for ESL teachers, paper version handouts related to the topic, lesson recording. Google Forms is user-friendly, making it easy for teachers to navigate and respond to the questionnaire without technical difficulties. Teachers can access Google Forms from various devices, including computers, tablets, and smartphones, providing flexibility in responding to the questionnaire. Google Forms is a free tool, which is advantageous for researchers with budget constraints as it eliminates the need for expensive survey software. Responses are collected in real-time, allowing researchers to monitor and analyze data promptly, facilitating a quicker research process. Topic-based handouts provide a structured format, aiding in organized learning and making it easier for students to follow the material. Students can use handouts as reference materials for studying, revising, or preparing for assessments, enhancing their understanding of the topic. Lesson observation provides valuable insights for teachers to enhance their teaching skills, fostering continuous professional development. Teachers receive constructive

feedback on their teaching methods, allowing for targeted improvements in areas such as instructional techniques and classroom management. With the help of the tools, data was collected. After explaining the differences between two particular tenses, contributing worksheets, it seemed a significant increase in understanding topics on the selected students.

Many teachers face time constraints when it comes to exchanging ideas with their colleagues. Therefore, utilizing a Google Form questionnaire is a quick and straightforward process that doesn't demand a substantial amount of time. Creating handouts in a paper format is convenient since a majority of students at school N2 do not use smartphones or laptops for various forms of data collection.

RESULTS

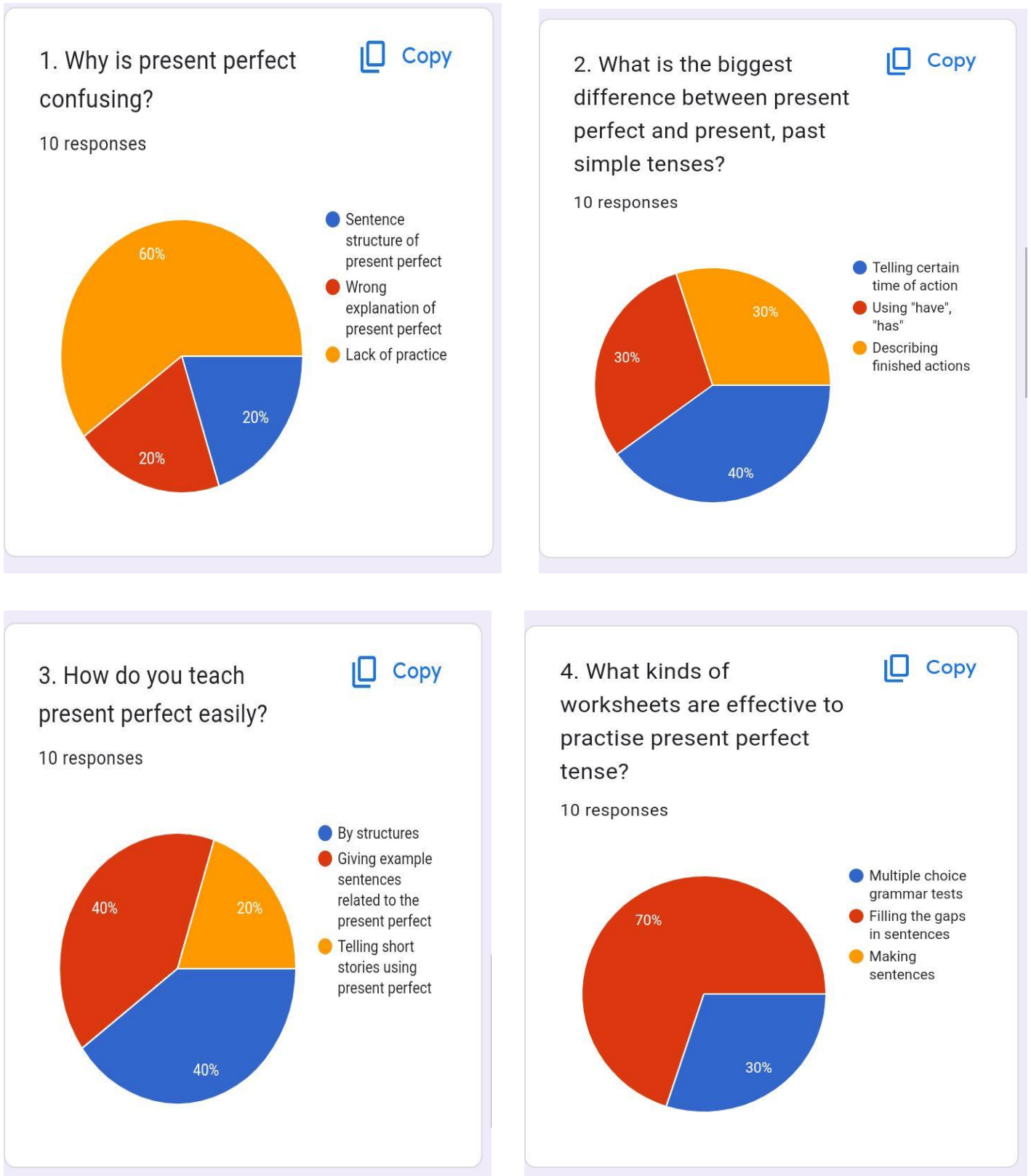
[Figure 1]

(Selected students in 11th grade)

Participants	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Student 1	48%	52%	52%	55%	60%	58%	66%
Student 2	54%	54%	57%	60%	66%	69%	74%
Student 3	55%	58%	54%	56%	56%	60%	64%
Student 4	71%	73%	76%	77%	79%	80%	84%
Student 5	66%	64%	67%	69%	74%	79%	82%
Student 6	70%	71%	77%	82%	85%	89%	93%
Student 7	68%	67%	70%	72%	75%	79%	83%
Student 8	72%	74%	77%	78%	81%	85%	90%
Student 9	54%	57%	60%	61%	66%	69%	71%
Student 10	65%	68%	70%	72%	77%	80%	86%

During the study, all students improved their knowledge in using present perfect and past simple. This table presents a comprehensive overview of the academic performance of 10 students over the course of seven days. Each row corresponds to an individual student, while each column represents a specific day. The percentages indicate the students' scores on their academic assessments for the respective days. Observing the data, you can track the variations in performance for each student throughout the week. For instance, Student 4 consistently shows high scores, gradually increasing from 71% on Day 1 to 84% on Day 7. On the other hand, Student 9 starts with 54% on Day 1, experiences fluctuations, and finishes with a score of 71% on Day 7. This table allows for a detailed analysis of how each student's academic performance evolves over the given time frame, offering insights into trends and potential areas of improvement.

(Google Form questionnaires for ESL teachers)
[Figure 2]



5. What is the aim of teaching present perfect tense?

10 responses

- Explaining the meaning of present perfect and using it correctly in writing and speaking
- How to learn describing finished actions
- Using different kind of past tenses
- Make the comparison of happening or happened actions
- The aim of teaching the present perfect tense in English is to convey the idea of a connection between past actions or experiences and the present moment.
- The main aim is using different past tenses to show your language.
- To use this tense in communication and in writing properly
- To describe action
- To teach grammar
- Differentiating actions

In the first question, 60% teachers answered that present perfect is confusing for students because of lack of practice. In the next question, 40% survey participants think that the most significant difference between present perfect and past simple is telling certain time of action. For other options: using "have", "has" and describing finished actions were responded equally. In the third questions asked that how English teachers explain present perfect and past simple. And 40% teachers explained given topics by structures and the same percentage of teachers give examples to the topics. In the fourth question, there were 3 options but all teachers chose only two types of worksheets: 70% multiple choice tests and 30% making sentences. In the last question, teacher typed their answer online and all their answer gathered. According to their answers, the main purpose of teaching present perfect is to help the students use this tense in their communication and in writing correctly.

DISCUSSION

Teaching tenses in English is crucial for effective communication as it lays the foundation for expressing time-related information. Understanding and using tenses correctly improves a learner's ability to convey precise meanings in both spoken and written language. Indeed, while previous research has focused on describing the grammatical rules of present perfect and past simple, there has been a recognized gap in connecting these rules to real-life examples. It is advised that future researches should explore interferences between English and Uzbek languages when teaching present perfect and past simple, with a particular focus on explaining irregular verbs. Ultimately, as students progress through the explanation of present perfect and past simple with given instructions, the incorporation of topic-based worksheets serves to advance their skills in using these tenses in communication.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated how to teach present perfect and past simple in the 11th grade students at school N2 in Kasansay, Namangan and giving effective instructions and techniques to explain the topics clearly. The results revealed a statistically significant improvement in test scores among students exposed to the new technique compared to those in the traditional teaching group. While our results are encouraging, we need to keep in mind that our study was short-term and focused on one school. To build on this, future research could explore how this technique works over a longer period and in different types of schools. In the end, our findings contribute to the conversation about better ways to teach particular two tenses in English language. It's a reminder that we should keep exploring new ideas to make learning more effective and enjoyable for students.

Appendix

Present Perfect/Simple Past

1. Fill in the gaps using either the Present Perfect or the Simple Past (one verb is in the Past Perfect).

Last week I _____ (meet) an old lady called Cindy. She _____ (be) eighty-two. She _____ (be) a beggar. She _____ (talk) to me and I _____ (hear) the story of her entire life. I _____ (feel) so sad when she _____ (finish) it that I almost _____ (cry). As I _____ (feel) sorry for her, I _____ (give) Cindy some money.

This morning something wonderful and amazing _____ (happen) to me. I _____ (meet) Cindy again, but, my goodness, she _____ (be) different. She told me the following.

"Since you _____ (give) me that money my life _____ (change) completely. With the money you _____ (give) me I _____ (buy) a lottery ticket and I _____ (win). I _____ (buy) myself a house where I'm living now. I _____ (also buy) some new clothes, a TV set ... you can't imagine how happy I am!

I _____ (be) so astonished that I couldn't even say a word. I _____ (follow) her and ... surprise! She _____ (buy) me a yellow Ferrari.

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