

**Людина в мовному просторі:
історична спадщина, проблеми,
перспективи розвитку**

**A Person in the Language Space:
Historical Heritage, Problems
and Development Prospects**

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**WHOLISTIC APPROACH TO TEACHING
PRESENT SIMPLE AND PAST SIMPLE TENSE FORMS**

It is well known that the acquisition of the system of grammatical tenses (and there are as many as 12 of them in English versus 3 in Ukrainian) is one of the greatest difficulties for those trying to learn this language. Such a variety of tenses in English is confusing and discouraging, and it is often the reason why people refuse to learn English. The *Present* and *Past Simple* tenses are among the most popular and frequently used in the English language.

It seems that everything is known about the formation of *Present* and *Past Simple* tenses because methods of their introduction in the classroom were developed a long time ago (in this work, we are going to talk only about the formation of these tenses, and not about their use). Nevertheless, students' low level of knowledge of this aspect of English grammar compels us to write about it and look for some new methods of teaching it. For example, when you ask a question: How is Present Simple formed? you normally receive a standard answer that in the affirmative form we use an infinitive of a verb (without *to*) after a subject. If a subject is expressed by the third person singular the verb gets the ending *-(e)s*; and the interrogative and negative forms are built with the help of the auxiliary verb *do/does*. This point can be illustrated by typical examples in Table 1 that can be found in any English grammar.

Table 1.

Present Simple: Basic Sentence Structure

Affirmative	Interrogative	Negative
I work	Do I work?	I do not work
You work	Do you work?	You do not work
We work	Do we work?	We do not work
They work	Do they work?	They do not work
He works	Does he work?	He does not work
She works	Does she work?	She does not work
It works	Does it work?	It does not work

Then you ask the following question: Is the sentence *He is a student* the Present Simple tense? And you are usually given an affirmative answer

too. At the request to transform this affirmative form into the negative and interrogative ones, you are also usually provided with the correct answer. But you rarely receive a satisfactory answer to the question: Why do you use *Is he..?* *He is not...* instead of *do/does not* according to the rule? Advanced learners certainly know that the verb *to be* does not need any auxiliary verb to form its negative and interrogative forms. Then you ask a student the next question: Is the sentence *He has got a brother* the Present Simple tense? And you are usually given an affirmative answer again. At the request to change this affirmative sentence into the negative and interrogative ones, advanced students do not encounter difficulties in transforming it. The question then remains: Why do you use *Has he got...?* *He has not got ...* instead of *do/does not* according to the rule? You are also provided with the same correct answer that the verb *have/has got* does not need any auxiliary verb to form its negative and interrogative forms. Similarly, the same questions arise and the same answers are given to the examples with the modal verbs in the Present Simple and similar examples (with the verbs *was, were* and *could*) in the Past Simple.

Thus, the above-mentioned verbs (that form their negative and interrogative forms without *do/does/did*) exist in the mind of students separately from all the other verbs. That is, it indicates the absence of a holistic picture of the Present Simple and Past Simple formation. Thus, it is the purpose of this work to clarify this process, which makes the current study *relevant* to the problems of teaching the above-mentioned tenses.

While considering the formation of Present Simple (table 2) we suggest presenting the material to students as follows. We divide all the existing English verbs into two unequal groups – group I (that is very small) and group II, (that is very big). In the table, they are separated by a heavy vertical line.

Table 2

I		II	
	↗	am	
be	→	is	
	↘	are	
have got/has got			
		can, may, must, should, etc.	

+	e.g. I am retired. She can play the guitar.	e.g. + I book a room. Bob books a room.
–	I am not retired. She cannot play the guitar.	– I do not book a room. Bob does not book a room.
?	Am I retired? Can she play the guitar?	? Do I book a room? Does Bob book a room? <u>But:</u> Who books a room?

Group I includes very few verbs and most of them are represented in column I: *be* in the form *am*, *is* or *are*, *have got/has got* and all the modal verbs (which are represented by the four most frequent ones). The reason for the singling out these verbs into such a small group is that only they can independently form the interrogative and negative forms in Present Simple, i.e. without the use of the auxiliary verb, as illustrated by the relevant examples (the affirmative, negative and interrogative forms are marked in the table by the symbols “+”, “–” and “?” respectively).

A teacher reminds/explains the use of *be* and *have got* forms, paying special attention to a little difference in the formation of the negative form of *have got* (*not* is put not after *got*, like in all other cases, but it is inserted between *have/has* and *got*).

Attentive students always pay attention to the fact that the verbs of the first group in the table are additionally divided by the heavy horizontal line into two subgroups. A teacher explains that even though the verbs above the horizontal line and below it form their negative and interrogative forms in the same way, there is a difference between them. And the difference is as follows. If one of the verbs above the horizontal line is used in the Present Simple (*am*, *is*, *are*, *have got*, *has got*), then no other verb can be used in this sentence. And the modal verbs (below the line) are always followed by a verb.

Group 2 includes all the other verbs which are not included in group 1. A teacher reminds/explains the formation of affirmative verb forms of this group (in all the persons singular and plural it coincides with the infinitive without the particle *to*, except in the third person singular where it gets ending *-(e)s*), and the interrogative and negative forms (they are formed with the help of auxiliary verb *do/does*). But if the

interrogative word is the subject, the auxiliary verb *do/does* is not used, and the form of such a question coincides with the form of an affirmation sentence.

Similarly, the formation of Past Simple is explained, the first column of which has even fewer verbs – only three (table 3).

Table 3

I		II
	↗ was	
be	→ were	
+	could	e.g.
	e.g. I was retired. She could play the guitar.	+ I booked a room. Bob booked a room. Bob went home
–	I was not retired. She could not play the guitar.	– I did not book a room. Bob did not book a room. Bob did not go home.
?	Was I retired? Could she play the guitar?	? Did I book a room? Did Bob book a room? Did Bob go home? <u>But:</u> Who booked a room?

These generalizing tables contribute to students' better comprehension of the peculiarities of the formation of the above tenses, and therefore to the promotion of their grammatical competence.

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