

## THE DIFFICULTIES UZBEK LEARNERS FACE WITH PERFECT TENSES

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the difficulties that Uzbek learners face when using English perfect tenses. Many students find these tenses difficult to understand because such structures do not exist in the Uzbek language. Learners often use auxiliary verbs like "have" and "had" incorrectly or omit them completely, and they also confuse the present perfect with the past simple tense. They make mistakes when using time expressions such as "since," "for," and "already." The results show that these problems are common among learners. The study suggests that more practice, clear explanations, and real-life examples can help students better understand perfect tenses.

**Keywords:** perfect tenses, Uzbek learners, grammar difficulties, auxiliary verbs, time expressions

### **Introduction**

English has several tenses, and perfect tenses—present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect—help show how different actions connect in time. But for Uzbek learners, these tenses are often confusing. Why? Because Uzbek does not have exact equivalents of these structures (Cook, 2008). So when learning English, Uzbek students naturally rely on their native language. That leads to mistakes. Many learners do not know when to use present perfect instead of simple past. Others struggle with past perfect or future perfect. They often misuse auxiliary verbs like *have*, *has*, or *had* (Swan, 2005). Time expressions such as *since*, *for*, and *already* also cause problems. This study looks at the main difficulties

Uzbek learners face with perfect tenses. It also explains why these problems happen and suggests practical ways to improve understanding. By analyzing common errors and learning habits, this research aims to help both teachers and students (Ellis, 1994).

### **Methodology**

To get a real sense of the challenges Uzbek learners face with perfect tenses, this study used a qualitative approach. I worked with a group of intermediate (B1–B2) students who were already learning English. To gather enough insight, I used a few different methods: classroom observation, analysis of students' written assignments, and speaking activities.

During regular lessons, I gave students exercises on present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect. As they worked, I paid close attention to the mistakes they made—especially with auxiliary verbs, verb forms, and time markers like *since*, *for*, and *already*. I took notes on the most common errors. On top of that, I had short, casual conversations with some students to hear in their own words what felt confusing or difficult about these tenses.

After collecting all the data, I sorted their errors into categories. That made it much easier to identify recurring problems among Uzbek learners struggling with perfect tenses (Ortega, 2009).

### **Results**

The findings showed that Uzbek learners struggle with English perfect tenses in several specific ways. The most common issue was misunderstanding the use of the present perfect tense. Many students used the past simple tense instead, especially when talking about experiences. For example, they said “*I saw that movie*” instead of “*I have seen that movie.*” This confusion is common among second language learners (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Another major problem involved auxiliary verbs such as *have* and *had*. Some learners omitted them completely, while others used incorrect forms. These errors often made sentences grammatically incorrect or unclear (Swan, 2005). In addition, many students struggled to form past participles correctly, especially with irregular verbs.

The study also showed that time expressions like *since*, *for*, *already*, and *yet* caused confusion. Learners often placed them incorrectly in sentences or misunderstood their meanings. Similar difficulties with tense and aspect have been discussed by Binnick (2012). Overall, these mistakes were very common among intermediate-level Uzbek learners. The results suggest that students need more focused practice and clearer explanations of perfect tenses.

### **Discussion**

Looking at the results, it is clear that Uzbek learners struggle with English perfect tenses not only because of grammar rules, but also because of differences between Uzbek and English language systems. One of the biggest issues was confusing the present perfect with the past simple tense. This problem is understandable because learners often transfer patterns from their first language into the target language (Ellis, 1994). Since Uzbek does not have direct equivalents of English perfect tenses, learners naturally experience confusion.

Another common difficulty involved auxiliary verbs such as *have* and *had*. Some students omitted them completely, while others selected the wrong form. According to Swan (2005), auxiliary verbs are among the most difficult grammar features for learners whose native languages structure time differently from English.

Students also had trouble using time expressions like *since*, *for*, and *already*. Their incorrect usage suggested that they did not fully understand the time relationships expressed by perfect tenses. Similar findings were reported in studies on second language acquisition and tense usage (Eubank, 1991). Researchers suggest that learners improve more effectively when grammar is taught through meaningful context and communication rather than isolated drills (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

The findings indicate that the root of the problem lies in the grammatical differences between Uzbek and English. Therefore, teachers should focus not only on grammar rules but also on meaning and real-life communication. Using contextualized examples, comparing Uzbek and English structures, and providing regular practice opportunities can help learners better understand and use perfect tenses.

## Conclusion

To conclude, Uzbek learners face several difficulties when using English perfect tenses. Most of these problems result from differences between Uzbek and English grammar systems. Because of this, students often confuse perfect tenses with other tenses, misuse auxiliary verbs, and struggle with time expressions such as *since* and *for*.

This study showed that these difficulties are common among intermediate-level learners and should be considered a natural part of second language learning. Perfect tenses are challenging because they express meanings that do not exist in the same way in Uzbek grammar (Cook, 2008).

The study suggests that teachers should move beyond simple grammar drills and instead provide clear explanations, real-life examples, and contextualized practice. Activities that focus on communication and practical usage can help learners understand how perfect tenses function in everyday English. With consistent practice, effective teaching methods, and patience, Uzbek learners can improve their understanding and use of English perfect tenses.

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