



## Simple Tenses in English and Ngalum (A Contrastive Study)

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**Abstract:** This study is a contrastive analysis between simple tenses in the English language and the Ngalum language. The research aims to make Ngalum language users understand and aware that Ngalum has a tense system like English, thus making it easier for them to learn tenses in English. The method used in this research is classical contrastive analysis, which involves description, juxtaposition, and comparison. The results of this study indicate that both languages have a tense system. In simple tenses, including past, present, and future tenses. Verbs change according to the tense. The function of these verb changes has the same meaning, indicating activities corresponding to events in the past, present, and future. One notable difference is that verbs in English can stand alone as verbs, while in Ngalum, they are bound to the subject. In the English language, subject markers in English verbs are found in simple present. Especially for the third person. Additionally, sentence structures differ between the two languages, with English following the pattern of Subject + Verb + Object while Ngalum follows Subject + Object + Verb. Even though these two languages are not closely related, they share a similar typology in terms of tense structure.

**Keywords:** Simple Tenses, English Language, Ngalum Language

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian analisis kontrastif antara Simple Sederhana dalam Bahasa Inggris dan Bahasa Ngalum. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk memberikan pemahaman dan kesadaran bagi pengguna Bahasa Ngalum bahwa bahasa ini memiliki sistem kala yang sama dengan bahasa Inggris. Dengan demikian, pengguna bahasa Ngalum lebih mudah mempelajari bahasa Inggris, khususnya kala dalam bahasa Inggris. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode klasik analisis kontrastif yaitu deksripsi, penjajaran dan perbandingan. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah kedua bahasa ini memiliki sistem kala yang sama. Dalam penelitian ini, terdapat kala sederhana lampu, kala sederhana kini dan kala sederhana futur. Pada kedua bahasa ini, perubahan kata kerja berdasarkan kala. Fungsi dari perubahan kata kerja pada kala memiliki makna yang sama yaitu menyatakan waktu lampau sederhana, kini sederhana dan futur sederhana. Adapaun perbedaan yaitu kata kerja dalam bahasa Inggris dapat berdiri sendiri sebagai kata dan menunjukan setiap kala sedangkan kata kerja dalam bahasa Ngalum melekat pada subjek sebagai pelaku aktifitas. Jadi, kata kerja memarkahi kala dan subjek. Dalam bahasa Inggris yang memarkahi subjek hanya pada simple sederhana, khususnya subjek atau pelaku ketiga tunggal. Selain itu, perbedaan lain terdapat pada struktur kalimat. Dalam bahasa Inggris memiliki susunan subjek+verba + Objek dan dalam bahasa Ngalum Subjek + Objek + Verba. Walaupun kedua bahasa ini bersasal dari rumpun bahasa yang berbeda namun kedua bahasa ini memiliki kesamaan dalam hal kala.

**Kata Kunci:** Kala Sederhana, Bahasa Inggris, Bahasa Ngalum

## 1. BACKGROUND

Language, as a communication tool that bridges one human to another, possesses various characteristics, constituting an artistic and cultural value. This is a cultural art within it. Therefore, Hall (1959:117) states that language is culture, and culture is language. According to the Collins Dictionary, language is a communication system consisting of a set of sounds and written symbols used by the people of a particular country or region for speaking or writing. Thus, every language in the world has diverse systems, symbols, and grammatical structures. It is an obligation to study a language to interact and understand each other.

Every language has varied patterns and grammatical systems, including its grammar. Grammar is a general term in linguistic studies (Crystal 1941:217). Harmer (2001: 12) defines grammar as the description of how words can change their forms and be combined into sentences in that language. According to Comrie (1958: 9), tense is a grammatical expression of the temporal location. Tense in English is divided into 12 times, as is the case in the Ngalum language.

This research focuses on simple tenses in English and simple tenses in the Ngalum language. English is an international language and is referred to as a *lingua franca* because it is spoken or used by almost the majority of countries. On the other hand, Ngalum is a local language for the Ngalum ethnic group, and their language is referred to as the Ngalum language. The Ngalum language serves as a traditional language among community members in the region of Pegunungan Bintang Regency. This is the language used by students in the English Education program at Okmin as their first language. Therefore, students are already familiar with the tense system present in this language. When studying tenses in English, it is easier for them due to their proficiency in the language.

Both languages share similarities in terms of tenses. English has a tense system, and similarly, the Ngalum language possesses this feature. This resemblance becomes an intriguing aspect for researchers to delve further into, particularly in simple tenses, which involve changes in verbs influenced by the respective tense. Two or more languages which have the same typological characteristics are interesting to be researched. It is also expressed by Krzeszowski (1990:9) that another field of linguistic comparisons emerged when languages were grouped based on various characteristics that they share. The area of linguistics concerned with such comparisons is called typological linguistics.

### 1.1 Research Questions

- 1.1.1 What are the Types of Simple Tenses in the English Language and Ngalum Language?
- 1.1.2 What are the Similarities and Differences in Simple Tenses between the English Language and the Ngalum Language?

### 1.2 Research Objectives

- 1.2.1 To identify the types of Simple Tenses in the English language and Ngalum language.
- 1.2.2 To understand the similarities and differences in Simple Tenses between the English language and the Ngalum language.

### 1.3 Significance of Research

The current research benefits for future researchers in the way that it can be used as a reference in developing research on tenses in English and other regional languages. For English language educators, it can aid in preparing teaching materials that are easily understood by speakers of regional languages (Ngalum) in comprehending the concept of tenses in both the English language and Ngalum language.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tense refers to the time at which the activity happened in the past, present, and future. Comrie (1985:36) defines the three basic tenses that have formed the backbone of much linguistic work on time reference in grammar, namely present, past, and future as follows; present tense means coincidence of the time of the situation and the present moment; past tense means location of the situation before the present moment; future tense means location of the situation after the present moment.

In this research, the researcher focuses on three tenses namely simple past tense, simple present tense, and simple future tense. According to Azar (2022:2) simple past is at one particular time in the past, when this happens. It happened and ended in the past. Simple present express action or situation that exists always, usually, and habitually, they exist now, have existed in the past, and probably will exist in the future. The simple future tense is at one particular time in the future, this will happen.

Some of the research that has been conducted and supports this research include the following studies. First, *Penggunaan Present Perfect Tense Bahasa Inggris oleh Siswa SMK Kesehatan Bakti Nusantara Gorontalo : Sebuah Analisis Kesalahan* by Antula (2016). The study uses the theory put forward by Ellis (1997). The research results found several errors in the use of the present perfect tense which were then grouped into the types of errors of omission (omission), errors in the use of forms (miss-information), and errors in placement (misordering).

Next, Kosay's (2017) study of *Kala dalam Bahasa Inggris dan Bahasa Balim; sebuah Analisis Kontrastif* show similarities and differences between the two languages. The similarity is that both languages have a tense system. There are 12 types of tenses in these two languages. Changes in verbs in each tense are influenced by the tense itself. Past simple, present simple, and future simple, etc. have their forms. Time markers are found in verb changes. The difference is in the formation of the verb. In English, verbs stand-alone and as temporary tense markers in the Balim language, word changes apart from marking tense also mark the subject as the doer of the activity. English exists but only in the third person marker when the simple 'we work' becomes 'she works.' Apart from that, verb changes also occur in the auxiliary verbs 'do/does' becoming 'did' and 'done'. Verbs in the Baliem language do not have auxiliary verbs.

Sikome (2015) conducted a study entitled *Kata Kerja dalam Bahasa Inggris dan Bahasa Sangir: Suatu Analisis Kontrastif*. This study applied the theory put forward by Frank (1972). The results found were that the two languages had differences in verbs. The differences found in English and Sangir language verbs are in the types of verbs that exist. In English, all verbs are found with the types of verbs classified by

Frank (1972), whereas in Sangir language there are no verbs with the types of auxiliary verbs and non-finite verbs.

Based on the previous research mentioned above, the study conducted by Antula and Tamboto shares similarities with the current research. Both analyze tenses, known as "*kala*" in Indonesian, but the difference lies in the focus: Antula and Tamboto concentrated on a single type of tense, whereas the present study examines three types of tenses. The research by Kosay in 2017 explored 12 tenses with different regional languages, whereas the current researcher is investigating three tenses with the Ngalum regional language. Sikome's research, while similar in terms of the studied language object and both examining verbs, differs in that Sikome's study focuses solely on presenting verbs, unlike the present study, which investigates changes in verbs based on time, which is the definition of "*kala*" or tense in English.

### **3. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses a descriptive method. In this research, two languages are compared so the researcher uses the contrastive analysis method in analyzing the data. As expressed by Krzeszowski (1990:9) When two or more languages are compared, it is possible to focus either on similarities or on differences. The researcher uses 3 kinds of classical contrastive analysis which consist of (1) description; a prior description of the language to be compared, and (2) juxtaposition; this step is crucial in deciding what is to be compared with what. and comparison; comparisons of various equivalent systems across languages, in this case, compare the similarities and differences between English language simple tenses and Ngalum language simple language (cf. Halliday et al. 1964: 113 — 114) in Krzeszowski (1990:35).

Based on data analysis, the researchers find that there 3 kinds of simple tenses in the English language and Ngalum language. The descriptions of each are described below.

### **4. RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Kinds of Simple Tenses English**

##### **4.1.1 Simple Past Tense**

According to Azar (2022:2) simple past is at one particular time in the past, when this happens or the action that happened in the past.

- 1) I went to campus yesterday  
'Saya pergi ke kampus kemarin'
- 2) She flew to Oksibil yesterday  
'Dia berangkat ke Oksibil kemarin'
- 3) I did not eat pork  
'Saya tidak makan daging babi'
- 4) Did she work in the garden?  
'Apakah dia bekerja di kebun?'

##### **4.1.2 Simple Present Tense**

According to Azar (2022:2), Simple present expresses an action or situation that exists always, usually, and habitually, they exist now, have existed in the past, and probably will exist in the future.

- 1) I go to campus every day.  
*'Saya ke kampus setiap hari'*
- 2) She flies to Oksibil this morning.  
*'Dia berangkat ke Oksibil pagi ini'*
- 3) I do not eat pork.  
*'Saya tidak makan daging babi'*
- 4) Does she work in the garden?  
*'Apakah dia bekerja di kebun?'*

#### 4.1.3 Simple Future Tense in the English Language

Azar (2022:2), the simple future tense is at one particular time in the future, this will happen or the action that will happen in the future.

- 1) I will go to campus tomorrow  
*'Saya akan pergi ke kampus besok'*
- 2) She will fly to Oksibil this morning  
*'Dia akan berangkat ke Oksibil pagi ini'*
- 3) I will not eat pork  
*'Saya tidak akan makan daging babi'*
- 4) Will she work in the garden?  
*'Apakah dia akan makan nasi'*

#### 4.2 Kinds of Simple Tenses in Ngalum Language

##### 4.2.1 Simple Past Tense in Ngalum Language

According to Azar (2022:2) simple past is at one particular time in the past, when this happens or the action that happened in the past. In Ngalum, the simple past form can be seen in the following examples:

- 1) Nea sino uma kampus a wansir  
*'saya pergi ke kampus kemarin'*
- 2) Kup Oksibil kamdik yusun pesawat dun unor  
*'Dia berangkat ke Oksibil kemarin'*
- 3) Kang a e warksoa  
*'saya tidak makan daging babi'*
- 4) Yong somader edo?  
*'Apakah dia bekerja di kebun'*

##### 4.2.2 Simple Present Tense in Ngalum Language

According to Azar (2022:2), Simple present expresses an action or situation that exists always, usually, and habitually, they exist now, have existed in the past, and probably will exist in the future. In Ngalum, the simple past form can be seen in the following examples:

- 1) Nea dingperjuma ka kampus  
*'Saya pergi ke kampus setiap hari'*
- 2) Kamdik ema u a pesawat ukur dun unor  
*'Saya berangkat ke Oksibil hari ini'*
- 3) Nua kang a e eno mo  
*'Saya tidak makan daging babi'*

- 4) U pna yong semo morkur edo?  
*'Apakah dia bekerja di kebun'*

#### 4.2.3 Simple Future Tense in Ngalum Language

Azar (2022:2), the simple future tense is at one particular time in the future, this will happen or the action that will happen in the future. In Ngalum, the simple past form can be seen in the following examples:

- 1) Ne dopa uma kampus a unok nesir  
*'saya akan pergi ke kampus besok'*
- 2) U a yabun pea Oksibil unok nor  
*'Dia akan berangkat ke Oksibil pagi ini'*
- 3) Ne a kang a e enok nesa  
*'sya tidak akan makan daging babi'*
- 4) U a yong semok nor edo?  
*'Apakah dia akan bekerja di kebun?'*

#### 4.3 The Similarities and Differences of Simple Tenses in English Language and Ngalum Language

##### 4.3.1 The similarities and Differences between Simple Past in the English Language and the Ngalum Language

The simple past similarities between the English language and the Ngalum language are found in the form of verbs. Each language has the shape of the verb which shows the simple past. Those verbs express the past event. The differences found in several items such as (a) the English language has the auxiliary verb 'did' in making negative and interrogative sentences, (b) In the English language, the verb of tense marker stands alone as verb 2 which shows the past event, but in the Ngalum language, simple past marker always sticks on a subject so a verb and subject in a word. Examples are below;

- 1) Nea dingperjuma ka kampus wansir  
*'Saya pergi ke kampus kemarin'*
- 2) I went to campus yesterday  
*'Saya pergi ke kampus kemarin'*

The underlined verb 'went' only marks the simple past tense, while the verb wansir marks the simple past and the subject 'I'. Another difference lies in sentence structure. In English, the sentence structure follows the order of subject, verb, and object, whereas in Ngalum, the order is subject, object, and then verb.

##### 4.3.2 The similarities and Differences between Simple Present in the English Language and the Ngalum Language

The similarity in tenses lies in the changes in verbs according to time or tense. Verbs change from the past tense. Additionally, there is a similarity in the form of simple present tense, which functions to express an event as a general truth, routine, or habit. The difference between the two languages is found in the third-person pronoun markers on verbs in English, while in Ngalum, these markers appear for all

subjects. All verbs are marked by the subject as the actor and the simple present tense. See the following examples.

- 1) She flies to Oksibil today  
'*Dia berangkat ke Oksibil hari ini*'
- 2) Kamdik emavu a a pesawat ukur dun unor  
'*Dia berangkat ke Oksibil hari ini*'

The difference is a verb In English 'flies' marks the present tense, and '-es' marks the third person singular as the actor. Meanwhile, the verb 'unor' marks both the actor and the verb.

#### 4.3.3 The similarities and Differences between Simple Future in the English Language and the Ngalum Language

The similarity in this tense is the change in verbs caused by the tense. The future tense forms in both languages serve the same purpose of indicating future time. The difference lies in the auxiliary verb 'will.' Ngalum language does not have an auxiliary verb form. Additionally, the sentence structure differs between English and Ngalum. In English, the structure is subject, verb, and object, while in Ngalum language, it is subject, object, and verb as seen in the following examples.

- 1) She will fly to Oksibil this morning  
'*Dia akan berangkat ke Oksibil pagi ini*'
- 2) U a yabum pea unoknor  
'*Dia akan berangkat ke Oksibil pagi ini*'

Based on examples show that the auxiliary verb 'will' is the maker of future events meanwhile in the Ngalum language the verb 'unoknor' marks the future event in the third person as an actor. *Unok* is the verb and *nor* is actor marker.

Mostly, the traditional language in Papua is marked by actor and tense. It means, structurally have different pattern of grammar but English language has same typopolgy with Ngalum that is has tenses system.

## 5. CONCLUSION

English and Ngalum both have a tense system. In simple tenses, both languages have three types: simple past tense, simple present tense, and simple future tense. In both languages, there are changes in verbs based on these time distinctions. The function of verb changes has the same meaning or significance. When examining the definition and function of tenses in English and Ngalum, they have the same definition and function in expressing time.

The difference found in this study of simple tenses is that English has auxiliary verbs, which change form according to time, while Ngalum does not have them. Verbs in English always stand alone, whereas verbs in Ngalum are always bound to the subject as the active doer. In Ngalum, verbs are always marked with the subject and the verb.

In general, sentence structure in English differs from Ngalum. English follows the structure of Subject, Verb, and Object, while Ngalum follows Subject, Object, and Verb, with the verb positioned last.

The research is limited to simple tenses, namely past, present, and future tenses. It is hoped that future researchers will conduct a comprehensive study covering all 12 tenses, providing valuable insights for learners. Additionally, it is recommended that researchers who are native speakers of the language be involved to better understand and explain verb changes over time effectively.

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