



Beyond the Basics: Investigating Grammar Struggles of Intermediate-Level University Learners

¹Najwa Suhartati, ^{*1}ST Ayu Surayya, ¹Laila Wati

¹Universitas Hamzanwadi, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

*Corresponding author, email: stayusurayya@gmail.com

Abstract	This study aims at identifying the grammar difficulties encountered by students in the Intermediate English Grammar course at Hamzanwadi University, investigate the contributing factors, and explore possible solutions proposed by students to address these challenges. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the research involved 20 purposively selected students. The data were collected through questionnaire, interviews to obtain students' perspectives and document analysis of their final examination papers to examine their actual grammar performance. To ensure the trustworthiness, methodological triangulation was applied. The data analysis in this study was carried out through three systematic stages, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, which were integrated within the framework of triangulation. The results revealed that the most frequent grammatical difficulties were related to tenses and clauses, while additional challenges were observed in subject-verb agreement, modals, articles, and prepositions. These difficulties were largely attributed to limited practice opportunities, difficulty in memorizing grammar rules, restricted vocabulary, and less engaging teaching methods. To overcome these issues, it is suggested that students engage in more contextual grammar practice using authentic materials, while lecturers adopt more communicative and interactive teaching strategies supported by targeted remedial sessions and constructive feedback, in order to enhance students' grammar mastery.
Keywords:	Grammar difficulties, intermediate English learners, descriptive qualitative research, contributing factors, teaching strategies

INTRODUCTION

English has become an international language that plays a vital role in education, science, and global communication. As a lingua franca, it enables students to access scientific literature, participate in international conferences, and engage in cross-cultural dialogue. In the context of higher education globalization, proficiency in English is not merely an advantage but a necessity for academic success and professional development. Scholars such as [Bhandari \(2023\)](#) emphasize that strong English skills are central to students' ability to thrive in international academic environments, while [Humphreys \(2023\)](#) highlights the increasing demand for English competence in globalized higher education systems.

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Among the four language skills which are speaking, listening, reading, and writing, grammar serves as the structural foundation that ensures accuracy and clarity in communication. Without sufficient grammatical competence, both spoken and written messages risk becoming ambiguous or misleading. Previous studies confirm that mastery of grammar enhances students' ability to produce coherent academic essays and present ideas logically (Wulandari, 2021; Rashid, 2021). Grammar is therefore not only a set of prescriptive rules but also a tool for expressing complex ideas effectively, particularly in academic contexts where precision and clarity are highly valued.

Recent research suggests that context-based grammar instruction is more effective than rote memorization of rules. Teaching grammar through authentic texts, speeches, and academic writing allows learners to apply structures in meaningful situations, thereby improving retention and practical use. Mardari (2022) and Bharathi et al. (2025) argue that contextualized grammar instruction significantly improves students' writing performance and communicative competence. This approach encourages learners to integrate grammar into authentic communication rather than treating it as isolated knowledge, making grammar learning more engaging and relevant to real-life academic tasks.

At the intermediate level, learners typically master basic structures such as simple tenses and sentence construction. However, difficulties arise when they encounter more complex features, including perfect tenses, passive voice, conditional sentences, relative clauses, and gerund-infinitive usage. Research in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts consistently shows that many university students continue to struggle with these areas despite years of formal instruction (Putra, 2019; Monalisa, 2021; Hanim & Anggraini, 2022). These persistent challenges suggest that traditional grammar teaching methods may not adequately address learners' developmental needs, particularly when moving beyond foundational structures.

Several factors contribute to students' difficulties in mastering intermediate grammar. Studies indicate that the sheer number of grammar patterns, limited exposure to authentic English use, and challenges in adapting to online learning environments are significant barriers (Monalisa, 2021; Faudi & Muchsin, 2025). In addition, ineffective grammar learning strategies hinder progress, while students who employ strategies such as repetition, peer discussion, and self-monitoring demonstrate better outcomes (Faudi & Muchsin, 2025). These findings highlight the importance of examining both linguistic and non-linguistic factors in grammar acquisition, as well as the strategies students use to overcome their difficulties.

This study is therefore significant in identifying the dominant grammar difficulties faced by intermediate-level university students, exploring the underlying causes of these challenges, and examining how grammar proficiency influences their writing and speaking skills. By analyzing students' experiences and strategies, the research aims to provide insights for developing more effective, contextual, and communicative grammar teaching approaches in higher education. The findings are expected to contribute to pedagogical innovations that enhance grammatical competence and overall English proficiency, thereby supporting students' academic success in a globalized educational environment (Pienemann, 2025; Putra, 2019).

METHOD

The research was conducted at Hamzanwadi University, focusing on intermediate-level students enrolled in English language courses. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that they had completed at least one grammar course and were currently studying intermediate grammar (Campbell et al., 2020). A total of 20 students participated in the questionnaire survey, while 10 students were interviewed to provide deeper insights. In addition, 20 student assignments were collected for document analysis. This combination of participants ensured a diverse range of perspectives and data sources, supporting methodological triangulation and enhancing the credibility of the findings (Natow, 2020).

Furthermore, to provide a clear understanding of how this study was conducted, the following section outlines the research design, participants, instruments, procedures, and analysis. A step-by-step figure below is presented to visually illustrate the methodological flow and ensure transparency in the research process.

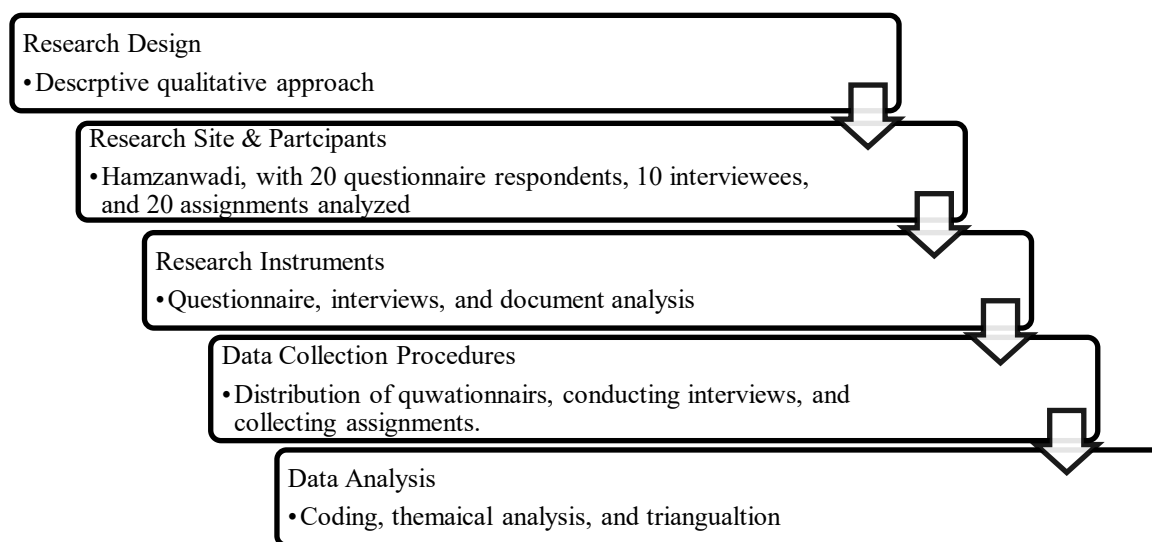


Figure 1. Research Methodological Flow

Figure 1 shows that this study employed three instruments to collect data, namely questionnaires, interview guidelines, and document analysis. A Likert-scale questionnaire was adapted from Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011), Ajaj (2022), and Ellis (2006) to measure students' perceptions, attitudes, and self-reported difficulties in grammar learning. The questionnaire consisted of 17 items that covered key grammar areas such as tense mastery, complex sentences, and factors contributing to grammar difficulties. To ensure reliability, the instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency (Taber, 2021). In addition to the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 students to explore their personal experiences, perceptions of grammar learning, and strategies used to overcome difficulties. The interviews included 10 guiding questions, were audio-recorded with the consent of participants, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed thematically following the principles of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Furthermore, student assignments, primarily essays and written reports, were analyzed using Processability Theory (PT) developed by Manfred Pienemann. This framework enabled the researcher to identify

developmental stages of grammar use and to pinpoint recurring errors in sentence construction, tense usage, and complex structures.

Meanwhile, the data collection process was carried out in three stages to ensure comprehensiveness and alignment with the research objectives. First, questionnaires were distributed to all participants to gather quantitative data on their perceptions and difficulties in grammar learning. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students to obtain qualitative insights into their experiences and strategies for overcoming grammar challenges. Finally, student assignments submitted during the semester were collected and analyzed to provide objective evidence of grammar use in academic writing. This multi-instrument approach allowed the researcher to obtain data that reflected both subjective perceptions and observable performance, thereby strengthening the depth and validity of the findings.

Then, the data analysis process employed triangulation techniques by combining results from questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. Responses were coded into categories such as “tense confusion,” “passive voice misuse,” and “lack of strategy.” Thematic analysis was then applied to identify recurring patterns across the different instruments. Cross-validation was conducted by comparing questionnaire data with interview insights and assignment errors, ensuring that findings were consistent and reliable. Triangulation across different data sources, respondents, and methods enhanced the internal validity of the study and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the grammar difficulties faced by intermediate-level university students (Fusch et al., 2023).

Finally, ethical approval for this study was obtained from the research committee of Hamzanwadi University. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was secured prior to data collection. To maintain confidentiality, student responses were anonymized, and participation was strictly voluntary. These measures ensured that the study adhered to ethical standards and respected the rights and privacy of all participants.

FINDINGS

The result of the research obtained through three primary data collection techniques those were questionnaire, interviews and document analysis. The questionnaire contained multiple-choice questions and a Likert scale that aimed at determining the types of grammar that were considered difficult by students. The interviews were conducted to gather direct insights from participants relevant to the research focus, while document analysis was used to examine written sources that support and complement the interview result. These three methods were applied triangulate to ensure a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the issues being studied. The data analysis in this study was carried out through three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, integrated within the triangulation process. For instance, the questionnaire result was displayed statistically, interview excerpts were used to provide contextual insights, and student assignments were analysed to illustrate the practical use of grammar. This stage enabled the researcher to compare and cross check result across the instruments. This triangulation process ensured that the result was systematically validated, thereby enhancing the credibility, reliability, and comprehensiveness of the study. The presentation of the result is organized systematically based on the research questions and objectives.

Types of Students' Difficulties in Intermediate English Grammar

The results demonstrate that students face several types of difficulties in mastering Intermediate English Grammar, which can be grouped into different categories as explained below.

a) Tenses Mastery

Table 1. Questionnaire result (Adapted from Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011; Ajaj, 2022)

No	Item	Scale					Total
		1 SA	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA	
1	I have difficulty understanding various tense forms.	0	3	8	6	3	69
2	I am confused when distinguishing the uses of perfect tenses (Present Perfect, Past Perfect, etc.).	2	3	6	7	2	64

Based on Table 1. Questionnaire Result, the difficulty concerned the use of various tenses. For the statement “*I have difficulty understanding various tense forms,*” students in general reported high levels of difficulty, while in “*I am confused when distinguishing the uses of perfect tenses (Present Perfect, Past Perfect, etc.),*” the challenge was also considerable. These results indicate that tenses, especially perfect tenses, represent one of the primary sources of difficulty for students in mastering grammar accurately.

Based on the interview result, most participants indicated that tenses are the most challenging topics in Intermediate English Grammar. These difficulties were mainly related to the use of verb tenses. Specifically, P-02 stated that, “*I confused about the time to use tenses especially when i using verb.,*” while according to P-09 that “*Tenses is difficult because its kind a difficult for me to memorize the form.*”

By examining students' written responses and analysing the types and frequency of grammatical errors such as mistakes in tenses, clauses, passive voice, and conditionals this section aims to provide a clearer picture of their grammar proficiency. The analysis is expected to offer valuable insights into the areas that require further instructional support.

Table 2. Document analysis of tenses

No.	Grammar Category	Type of Grammar Error	Original Sentences	Corrected Version
1)	Tenses	Verb	Let it to me to decide, please	Leave it to me to decide, please
			Jane wanted to lend twenty pounds from me for the school the trip	Jane wanted to borrow twenty pounds from me for the school the trip
			Has anyone borrow my pencil without asking me?	Has anyone borrowed my pencil without asking me?

Based on Table 2. the errors identified, such as “*Let it to me to decide, please*” and “*Has anyone borrow my pencil without asking me?*”, demonstrate students' difficulty in applying correct verb morphology (e.g., infinitive vs. base vs. past participle forms). These mistakes correspond to PT Stage 2 (Category Procedure) and Stage 3 (Phrasal Procedure), where learners are expected to produce accurate inflectional endings and manage verb–argument structures. The consistent confusion between *borrow* / *borrowed* and incorrect verb complementation indicates that many students have not yet fully mastered these early PT stages.

b) Passive Voice

The results also highlight students' difficulties with the passive voice, as many reported frequent errors in constructing and applying this structure in communication. Similarly "*I find it challenging to use the passive voice correctly*" and "*I also often make grammar mistakes when speaking*" were largely reported as problematic, suggesting that the use of grammar in productive skills, particularly in speaking and constructing passive forms, remains a significant issue.

Table 3. Document analysis of passive voice

No.	Grammar Category	Type of Grammar Error	Original Sentences	Corrected Version
1)	Passive Voice	Verb	Will they left the boat leave in this bad weather	Will they leave the boat let in this bad weather

Based on Table 3, the document analysis of students' work revealed that the use of the passive voice remains a significant challenge. For example, the sentence "*Will they left the boat leave in this bad weather*" demonstrates errors in auxiliary selection and verb form, indicating difficulty in constructing grammatically correct passive structures.

According to Processability Theory (PT), the production of passive voice involves interphase processing, which corresponds to Stage 4 in the PT hierarchy. At this stage, learners must coordinate multiple elements across phrases, such as selecting the correct auxiliary verb, applying the past participle, and arranging sentence constituents appropriately. The observed errors suggest that many intermediate-level learners have not yet fully stabilized the Stage 4 interphase procedures required for accurate passive construction.

c) Modal

These difficulties were mainly related to the understanding of modals. As stated by P-02 and P-04 on interview that "*I having trouble with modals.*"

Table 4. Document analysis of modal

No.	Grammar Category	Type of Grammar Error	Original Sentences	Corrected Version
1)	Modals	Verb	Should I lent him my football? I promised my brother he could sat beside me	Should I land him my football? I promised my brother he could sit beside me

Furthermore, based on Table 4, the document analysis of students' assignments revealed persistent errors in the use of modal verbs. Examples include "*Should I lent him my football?*" and "*I promised my brother he could sat beside me*", where students incorrectly applied modal verb rules with base and past forms.

According to Processability Theory (PT), the correct use of modals involves morphological and phrasal procedures, corresponding to PT Stages 2–3. At these stages, learners are expected to select the correct verb form following a modal and integrate it appropriately within the sentence. The errors observed indicate that many intermediate-level learners have not yet fully stabilized these early-stage processing procedures, resulting in frequent misuse of verb forms with modals.

d) Complex Sentences (Conditional Sentences and Clauses)

Table 5. Questionnaire result on complex sentences (Adapted from Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011; Ajaj, 2022)

No	Item	Scale					Total
		1 SD	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA	
1	Conditional sentences often confuse me.	0	4	7	6	3	66
2	I have not yet mastered how to form noun clauses.	1	4	7	4	4	66
3	I have not yet mastered how to form adjective clauses.	2	2	9	5	2	63
4	I have not yet mastered how to form adverbial clauses.	1	4	9	4	2	62
5	I make errors in subject–verb agreement.	2	4	7	4	3	62

Based on Table 5, where students mostly admitted to frequent grammar mistakes. Difficulties with conditional sentences, noun clauses, and confusion caused by the large number of grammar rules were also largely experienced, reflecting struggles in mastering more complex structures.

Meanwhile, moderate levels of difficulty were found in subject–verb agreement, as well as in the use of adjective clauses and adverbial clauses, which students generally understood but still found challenging to apply correctly.

Additionally, P-07 and P-08 stated that they found all topics in Intermediate English Grammar to be difficult, without exception. P-03 highlighted “*The difficulties in conditional sentences because it’s too many rules, particularly in distinguishing the types of conditionals and their application*”. However, the overall responses indicated that most participants struggled primarily with tenses and clauses, according to P-04 that “*I feel confused about learn tenses and clause*”. These suggest that although the most common difficulties are centered on complex sentences, students’ struggles vary depending on their individual learning experiences and backgrounds.

Table 6. Document Analysis of Complex Sentences

No.	Grammar Category	Type of Grammar Error	Original Sentences	Corrected Version
1)	Conditional Sentences	Verb	If you left before I do, close the door	If you leave before I do, close the door
			If you need a pen I can lent you one	If you need a pen I can lend you one
2)	Report Speech (Complex Sentences)	Verb	Julie told that she would join us after work	Julie said that she would join us after work
			I said to him I wasn’t impressed	I told to him I wasn’t impressed

Based on Table 6, the document analysis of students’ assignments revealed significant difficulties in producing complex sentences, particularly in conditional sentences and reported speech. Examples include “If you left before I do, close the door”, where students misused verb tenses within the conditional clause, and “Julie said that she would join us after work”, where reporting verbs and subordinate structures were incorrectly applied.

According to Processability Theory (PT), the production of subordinate clauses and complex sentence structures corresponds to Stage 5 (Subordination Procedure). At this stage, learners must coordinate multiple elements across clauses, select appropriate verb forms, and manage tense relationships between the main and subordinate clauses. The errors observed indicate that many intermediate-level learners have not yet fully developed the Stage 5 processing procedures required for accurate conditional constructions and reported speech.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that intermediate-level students at Hamzanwadi University experience significant difficulties in several core areas of English grammar, particularly tenses, conditional sentences, passive voice, modals, and reported speech. These patterns emerged consistently across questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis, demonstrating strong triangulated evidence. Among these areas, tenses were identified as the most challenging, followed by difficulties in constructing complex sentences and applying verb forms accurately in modal and passive structures.

From the perspective of Processability Theory (PT), these difficulties are developmentally predictable. PT posits that learners acquire grammatical structures in a fixed sequence based on the processing procedures they have developed (Pienemann, 1998; Pienemann, 2025). Errors in verb forms within tenses and modals, such as “*Should I lent him my football?*”, typically reflect incomplete mastery of PT Stage 2 (Lexical Procedure) and Stage 3 (Phrasal Procedure), where learners must retrieve appropriate verb forms and integrate them after modal auxiliaries. Similarly, the recurring errors in conditional sentences and reported speech correspond to Stage 5 (Subordination Procedure), which requires learners to coordinate tense, aspect, and clause relationships across multi-clausal constructions (Bettoni & Di Biase, 2015). Students’ struggles with sentences like “*If you left before I do...*” and “*Julie told that...*” demonstrate that many have not fully internalized the processing capacity required for interclausal grammatical dependencies.

The results align with studies showing that Indonesian and other EFL learners consistently struggle with tense selection, particularly perfect tenses, due to L1 interference and insufficient contextualized practice (Listia & Febriyanti, 2023; Yolageldili & Oflaz, 2020). Similarly, tense-related errors in European, Middle Eastern, and Asian contexts have been widely documented (Arslan, 2019; Sileikaite, 2021), indicating that tense acquisition remains a persistent challenge for intermediate EFL learners globally. Then, difficulties in modals and reported speech reinforce the findings of Paputungan et al. (2022), who noted that EFL learners often confuse modal patterns and struggle with transformations from direct to indirect speech. This is supported by other studies indicating that modals require higher conceptual and processing demands, making them challenging even for advanced learners (Nugroho & Hafrizon, 2020; Ellis & Shintani, 2014).

In addition, errors in passive voice reflect difficulties associated with PT Stage 4 (Interphrasal Procedure), which involves managing complex functional mappings between subjects, verbs, and objects (Di Biase & Kawaguchi, 2002). Learners at this stage often fail to realign grammatical roles during sentence transformation, resulting in errors such as incorrect auxiliary selection or misuse of past participles. Such findings have been similarly reported in studies on EFL passive constructions (Aljeneibi, 2022; Rahman, 2020).

Meanwhile, analysis of interview data shows that students perceive grammar as difficult because they struggle to apply rules in real communicative contexts, not merely because they lack theoretical knowledge. Many reported confusions with perfect tenses, modal-verb combinations,

and the sequencing of events in conditional sentences. This supports the idea that grammar difficulties arise not only from cognitive limitations but also from insufficient opportunities to practice processing grammar in real time, as emphasized in PT and skill-acquisition theory (DeKeyser, 2018; VanPatten, 2017).

These findings confirm that students' grammatical competence has not fully transitioned into procedural knowledge. Their written errors reflect challenges in automatizing morphosyntactic processing, especially when constructing sentences that require coordination across multiple grammatical elements.

Factors Contributing to Students' Difficulties in Intermediate English Grammar

Students encounter several factors that hinder their mastery of Intermediate English Grammar. One major factor is the lack of regular grammar practice, which limits their ability to internalize grammatical rules outside the classroom (DeKeyser, 2018; Murphy, 2020). In addition, the teaching methods are often too theoretical and insufficiently contextualized, making it difficult for students to connect grammar lessons with real-life communication (Mardari, 2022; Bharathi et al., 2025). Another significant challenge is the difficulty in memorizing grammar rules, which are often perceived as complex and overwhelming (Ajaj, 2022). This is further compounded by limited vocabulary knowledge, which restricts students' understanding and application of grammatical structures (Rashid, 2021). Moreover, many students struggle with a lack of confidence in speaking, as they hesitate to use grammar for fear of making mistakes, a phenomenon that has also been reported among EFL learners in previous studies (Monalisa, 2021). Taken together, these factors contribute to the difficulties students face in mastering Intermediate English Grammar effectively. Furthermore, similar patterns of grammar learning difficulties have been identified among Indonesian university students, particularly in mastering complex grammatical structures and applying them accurately in authentic communication (Hanim & Anggraini, 2022). These findings also align with Faudi and Muchsin (2025), who reported that limited practice, inadequate learning strategies, and insufficient learner autonomy are among the main factors influencing students' grammar proficiency.

Table 7. Questionnaire Result (Adapted from Ajaj, 2022; Ellis, 2006)

No	Item	Scale					Total
		1 SA	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA	
1	I don't get regular grammar practice.	1	4	7	7	1	63
2	The way grammar is taught in class is difficult for me to understand.	4	3	5	7	1	59
3	I rarely use grammar in everyday conversation.	3	2	7	6	2	62
4	I lack confidence when using grammar in speaking.	1	4	6	8	1	64
5	Grammar instruction is too theoretical and lacks connection to real-world contexts.	2	3	7	6	2	63
6	I think that grammar is the most difficult part of learning English.	1	2	7	3	7	73
7	I find grammars confusing because there are too many rules.	2	3	8	3	5	67

Based on the result of the Likert scale questionnaire, the data indicate that students experienced varying levels of difficulty across different aspects of Intermediate English Grammar. The highest level of difficulty appeared in the statement *“I think that grammar is the most difficult part of learning English,”* where students mostly agreed, showing that grammar is generally perceived as the most challenging component of English learning. Additionally, it was revealed that many students struggle due to a lack of regular grammar practice. Statements such as *“I don’t get regular grammar practice”* and *“I rarely use grammar in everyday conversation”* received considerable agreement, indicating that students do not consistently apply grammar outside the classroom. This limited exposure reduces their opportunities to internalize grammar rules and use them accurately in real communication. This limited exposure prevents the proceduralizing of grammar, a crucial process in which explicit knowledge of rules becomes automatic and usable in real communication (DeKeyser, 2018).

All interviewees agreed that the lack of consistent practice and difficulty in memorizing formulas and grammar rules were the main reasons for their struggles. P-09 stated that *“Lack of practice and I find it difficult to memorize all of the form”*. This reliance on memorization is problematic because it does not support long-term acquisition; research shows that grammar learning is most effective when learners engage in pattern recognition and meaningful use rather than rote memorization (Larsen-Freeman, 2018; Spada & Lightbown, 2021). Without opportunities to use grammar in communication, memorized rules tend to remain inert and inaccessible during real-time language production.

All participants suggested that consistent practice is the key solution to overcoming grammar difficulties. For future improvements, they hoped that Intermediate English Grammar classes would be delivered in a more engaging and interactive way, with more direct practice. P-03 recommended that *“The lecturers would have to give some practice and exercises,”* and P-09 emphasized that *“Lecturers should offer clear explanations and practical sentence examples related to the grammar rules.”* These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that contextualized and practice-oriented grammar instruction significantly improves learners’ grammatical accuracy and writing performance (Bharathi et al., 2025; Mardari, 2022). Likewise, communicative grammar instruction that incorporates meaningful classroom activities has been shown to increase learners’ motivation and facilitate grammar acquisition (Fithriani, 2019).

In addition, several participants proposed self-study strategies outside of class and the use of technology-based learning tools, such as YouTube, Grammarly, ChatGPT, and English-language videos or movies. For instance, P-06 shared that *“I study grammar independently twice a week,”* and P-01 stated that *“Don’t just rely on learning grammar in the classroom but try to learn by yourself from home by using online platforms such as YouTube and the Grammarly application.”* These results indicate that a combination of classroom-based practice and technology-enhanced self-learning is perceived as an effective strategy for improving grammar proficiency among students. Similar findings have been reported by Faudi and Muchsin (2025), who found that independent grammar learning strategies positively contribute to students’ grammar proficiency, and by Humphreys (2023), who emphasized the growing role of digital technologies in supporting English language learning in higher education. Furthermore, Andayani (2022) argues that the

integration of digital learning resources enables university students to extend language learning beyond the classroom and promotes greater learner autonomy.

The questionnaire and interview data reveal several interrelated factors that collectively contribute to students' persistent difficulties in mastering Intermediate English Grammar. One major factor is the lack of regular practice, both inside and outside the classroom. Students consistently agreed with statements such as *"I don't get regular grammar practice"* and *"I rarely use grammar in everyday conversation,"* indicating that they do not consistently engage with grammar beyond formal instruction. This limited exposure prevents the proceduralization of grammar, a crucial process in which explicit knowledge of rules becomes automatic and usable in real communication (DeKeyser, 2018). Moreover, Rashid (2021) argues that grammar competence develops more effectively when learners repeatedly apply grammatical knowledge in meaningful communicative contexts rather than relying solely on memorization of rules. This finding also supports Murphy's (2020) view that sustained exposure and continuous practice are fundamental for developing accurate grammatical competence and achieving greater fluency in English use.

Solutions to Overcome Students' Difficulties

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effectively when learners repeatedly apply grammatical knowledge in meaningful communicative contexts rather than relying solely on memorization of rules.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results obtained through questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis, it can be concluded that students in the Intermediate English Grammar course still face considerable challenges, particularly in mastering tenses and clause structures. Frequent errors in verb forms, especially in perfect tenses and conditional clauses, indicate that these areas remain the primary source of mistakes in both written and spoken contexts. In addition, students also struggle with modals, passive voice, reported speech, and conditional sentences. These difficulties reflect limited mastery of grammar rules and challenges in applying them accurately, which are often caused by insufficient practice, lack of confidence, and limited vocabulary. The findings emphasize that tenses are the most problematic area, with other grammar categories adding further obstacles. Therefore, improving students' grammar competence requires more interactive, practice-oriented, and learner-centered strategies. Such approaches would help learners internalize grammar structures more effectively, reduce persistent errors, and enhance their overall English proficiency. To deepen and expand the understanding of students' grammar challenges, future researchers are encouraged to explore how digital grammar tools or mobile applications influence students' mastery of tenses, clauses, and other challenging structures.

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