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# ENGLISH TENSE LEARNING THROUGH TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION: PERCEPTIONS OF BEGINNING-LEVEL EFL LEARNERS

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***Abstract***
*Mastering English tenses is an important aspect since tenses assist learners to have a big picture of language patterns and empowers them to communicate in meaningful conversations both in social and professional settings. EFL learners in several levels make effort to learn English tenses, including the first-semester students of English department Universitas Pamulang. However, traditional grammar teaching methods most likely rely on rote memorization which has been criticized for failing to help learners apply grammatical knowledge in real-life communication. This study aims to explore the overall students' perceptions regarding the implementation of Task-Based Learning (TBL) in learning English tenses as well as to investigate the benefits and challenges of using TBL by involving 30 students. The writers applied qualitative research, and case study was chosen as the design of study. To collect data, the writers conducted classroom observations and semi-structured interview. The results show that the students viewed TBL as an effective and helpful approach that creates a fun, engaging, interactive, and creative learning environment. However, despite its positive contributions, the implementation of Task-Based Learning also presents several challenges. Some students experienced difficulties in using correct tenses, limited grammar and vocabulary mastery, low confidence in speaking and presenting, and task and time constraints. To address these difficulties, the students developed several strategies to overcome these challenges; reviewing learning materials, practicing more frequently, motivating themselves, and seeking help from lecturers and classmates.*

***Keywords:*** *EFL learners, students' perceptions, task-based learning, tenses*

## 1. Introduction

Students' perceptions play an important role in language learning because the way learners view classroom activities is closely related to their motivation, engagement, and willingness to participate (Mohamedamin & Seyyedi, 2025; Husna, 2025). When learners respond positively, they are more likely to show enthusiasm, persistence, and willingness to use the target language. In contrast, negative perceptions may result in reduced interest and limited progress. Understanding students' viewpoints therefore enables educators to adapt their methods to learners' needs and challenges. Hence, effective teaching strategies are needed to achieve learning goals, and classroom activities should be attractive and enjoyable so that learners are encouraged to develop their own creativity and find effective ways of learning (Buditama, 2017).

One of the most challenging areas for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners is mastering English tenses.

Tenses are fundamental to constructing accurate sentences and expressing time-related ideas because they show when something happens (Michaelis, 2021; Sholihin, Pertiwi, & Lubis, 2023). Using verb tenses correctly also avoids confusion, since the tense learners choose reflects their proficiency (Listia & Febrianty, 2020).

However, learning tenses needs a lot of effort. EFL learners tend to face some challenges in comprehending tense usages, functions and the different changes in verbs, including the first semester students of English Department faculty of letters at Universitas Pamulang. These students see tenses as rules and patterns which are not really connected to real-life. Some students are also frustrated because of the complexity and irregularity rules in tenses in terms of time, verbs, aspect and meaning (Damis et al, 2024) which leads to anxiety and lack of confidence that reduce their motivation in learning. Beside those internal challenges, the most frequent external problem faced is that the use of traditional methods of learning which require them memorizing the patterns of certain tenses, and they are expected to discover the tenses rules just by using the examples provided. These uninteresting methods create boredom and unable to boost students' motivation in learning.

Task-Based Learning (TBL) offers a more contextualized alternative. TBL emphasizes learning to communicate in the target language through meaning-focused interaction (Sholeh, Salija, & Sahril, 2020) and enables learners to master grammar through authentic language use (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Ellis (2003) describes a task as an activity in which meaning is primary, there is a communicative gap, and learners use their own linguistic resources to reach a non-linguistic outcome. Willis (1996) proposes a framework of pre-task, task cycle (task, planning, and report), and language focus, in which learners first use language and only afterward analyze its forms. Applied to tenses, learners use tenses to complete tasks such as diary writing, holiday planning, interviewing classmates, and problem-solving discussion before examining how the forms work. This study draws on TBL as its framework, and the theory is discussed further in the next section.

Several recent studies have examined task-based approaches, but their focus differs from the present study. Mohamedamin and Seyyedi (2025) surveyed 36 secondary school students in Kurdistan after one semester of TBLT, and found positive perceptions overall, with tasks seen as engaging, student-centred, and real-world oriented. However, the study centered on speaking, not grammar. In the Indonesian context, Husna (2025) used a qualitative descriptive design with classroom observation, a teacher interview, and focus group discussions, and found that students responded positively to tasks that were interactive, collaborative, and creative, such as poster-making, role-playing, and group discussions. That study focused on student engagement rather than on a specific grammar topic. In contrast, Ouazani (2022) targeted tenses. The study involved thirty first-year students and examined task-based consciousness-raising tasks on the past simple, past perfect, and past continuous tenses, and found no significant difference from traditional PPP teaching in explicit knowledge, although the task-based group appeared more accurate and confident in expressing themselves. That study, however, used an experimental design that measured learning outcomes, so students' own views on the benefits and difficulties of the activities were not explored in depth. Taken together, existing studies either examine perceptions of TBL in general skills or

examine tenses through test results. To the researcher's knowledge, studies exploring first-semester students' perceptions of TBL specifically in learning English tenses in the Indonesian university context remain scarce.

This study therefore focuses on first-semester students of the English Department, Universitas Pamulang, for three reasons. First, they are beginners at a stage crucial for building the grammar foundation needed for later academic and professional language use. these students had directly experienced TBL activities in their tenses class, so they could give informed perceptions based on real experience. Data were collected through structured questionnaire was administered to the 30 first-semester students of the English Department at Universitas Pamulang since perceptions can only be accessed from the learners' own views.

Given these points, this study aims to explore first-semester students' perceptions of Task-Based Learning in learning English tenses. It addresses three questions: (1) How do first-semester university students perceive the use of TBL in learning English tenses? (2) What benefits and challenges do they experience? (3) How do they overcome the challenges faced during the implementation of TBL? The findings are expected to help lecturers design more engaging, student-centered grammar activities and to serve as a reference for future research on TBL and grammar teaching.

## 2. Literature Review

Grammar is an important component of English language learning because it helps learners construct meaningful and grammatically appropriate sentences. One important aspect of English grammar is tense, which indicates the time of an action or situation. However, English tenses can be difficult for EFL learners because they involve different grammatical patterns and rules. Ali et al. (2021) found that learners experienced difficulties in applying English tenses, while Listia and Febriyanti (2020) reported problems among EFL learners in using tenses appropriately. These difficulties suggest that tense learning needs teaching activities that not only introduce grammatical rules but also provide opportunities for learners to apply the forms in meaningful contexts.

However, learning tenses has always been challenging for students, especially tenses are quite complicated for the students to learn because each element has specific rules that must be followed when using it in the language (Spahiu & Kryeziu, 2021). Students may struggle to understand tenses for variety of reasons. Ali, Ali, and Hussain (2021) mentioned that the factors include interference from students' mother tongue, lack of family educational background, lack of a supportive learning environment in the classroom, inappropriate teaching methods, and lack of training for teachers in teaching English tenses.

Task-Based Learning, also referred to as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), places meaningful tasks at the center of language learning. Ellis (2003) explains that task-based language teaching provides learners with opportunities to use language to achieve communicative outcomes through tasks. The focus is therefore not only on the correct production of language forms but also on the meaning that learners need to convey while completing a task. Willis (1996) proposes three main phases of task-based learning: the pre-task, the task cycle, and the language focus. The pre-task phase prepares learners for the topic and task, the task cycle allows learners to complete the task and communicate their ideas, and the language focus provides opportunities to examine and practice

language forms that emerge from the task.

The use of TBL can also be applied to English tense learning. For example, learners can be asked to describe daily activities using the simple present tense, discuss past experiences using the simple past tense, or talk about future plans using appropriate future expressions. Through such activities, learners are encouraged to use tense forms to communicate meaning rather than simply memorize grammatical formulas. After completing the task, the teacher can draw learners' attention to the grammatical forms used and provide opportunities for correction and further practice. In this way, TBL can connect grammatical knowledge with actual language use.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between task-based learning and grammar learning. Ananda and Asiza (2025) investigated the impact of task-based learning on grammar proficiency in EFL teaching and showed the relevance of task-based activities for grammar development. Nhan (2023) also examined the effect of task-based language teaching on the grammar learning of EFL adolescent learners. In addition, Ridwan et al. (2023) investigated the use of TBLT to develop students' grammar skills through an online application. These studies indicate that task-based instruction has been explored as an alternative approach to supporting learners' grammatical development.

Previous research has also examined learners' perceptions of task-based instruction. Hastuti et al. (2023) investigated students' perceptions of TBLT in vocabulary learning, while Prianty et al. (2022) examined perceptions and implementation of TBLT in speaking instruction. Sahrawi (2017) also investigated students' and teachers' perceptions of TBLT in a listening class. These studies demonstrate that learners' perceptions are an important aspect of evaluating task-based instruction because students may experience both benefits and difficulties when participating in task-based activities. Jing et al. (2023) further reported challenges related to the implementation of TBLT at the university level, indicating that task-based instruction may involve difficulties related to classroom implementation and learner participation.

Although previous studies have discussed TBL in grammar learning and investigated learners' perceptions of task-based instruction, limited attention has been given to how beginning-level EFL learners perceive task-based instruction specifically in English tense learning. Previous research has generally focused on grammar proficiency, individual language skills, or task-based instruction in broader contexts. Therefore, further research is needed to understand learners' experiences when they learn English tenses through task-based activities, including the benefits they perceive, the challenges they encounter, and how they respond to those challenges. This study addresses this gap by examining the perceptions of beginning-level EFL learners toward English tense learning through task-based instruction.

## 3. Research Method

### 3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design to explore first-semester university students' perceptions of Task-Based Learning (TBL) in learning English tenses. Creswell and Poth (2025) explain that qualitative research aims to understand social or human problems by exploring participants' perspectives and experiences in their natural settings. This approach was appropriate for the present study because it focused on students' perceptions, experiences, benefits,

challenges, and strategies for overcoming difficulties during TBL activities rather than primarily examining numerical outcomes.

A case study design was selected to provide an in-depth understanding of students' experiences within a specific educational context. Simons (2009) explains that a case study involves an in-depth exploration of a particular case from multiple perspectives in real-life settings. In this study, the case focused on the implementation of TBL in teaching English tenses in the Basic Grammar course at Universitas Pamulang. Classroom observations, students' responses, and instructional documents were used to examine students' experiences and perceptions of the learning process.

### 3.2 Data Sources and Research Participants

The participants in this study were 30 first-semester students from the English Department, Faculty of Letters, at Universitas Pamulang who were enrolled in the Basic Grammar course. The researchers selected the participants from one class among the available classes in the English Department. The participants were included because they were directly involved in learning English tenses through TBL activities. Their experiences were relevant to the research objectives, which focused on students' perceptions of TBL, the benefits and challenges they experienced, and the strategies they used to overcome learning difficulties. The available research materials do not specify a formal sampling technique; therefore, the selection is described according to the procedure reported in the study.

### 3.3 Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Data were collected through classroom observation, questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. These methods were used to investigate students' engagement in TBL activities and their perceptions of learning English tenses. The data collection procedures were conducted in the following stages.

First, the researchers selected 30 first-semester students from one Basic Grammar class in the English Department at Universitas Pamulang. Second, the researchers implemented TBL activities to facilitate students' learning of various English tenses. Classroom observations were conducted over eight class meetings to examine students' engagement and participation during the learning process. The activities included diary writing, story writing, holiday planning, interviewing classmates, and problem-solving discussions. Students' engagement was observed through both written and spoken activities.

Third, a structured questionnaire was administered to the participants to gather information about their perceptions of TBL, including its benefits, challenges, and the strategies they used to overcome difficulties in learning English tenses. Fourth, semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain more detailed information about students' responses, feelings, and opinions regarding the implementation of TBL. The interviews allowed participants to elaborate on their learning experiences and explain the difficulties they encountered during the activities.

Finally, the teaching module and lesson plans used during TBL-based instruction were examined to understand how the learning activities were organized and how English tenses were incorporated into classroom tasks. The information obtained from these data collection methods was subsequently organized and analyzed according to the research objectives.

### 3.4 Research Instruments

The research instruments consisted of a structured questionnaire, a semi-structured interview guide, classroom observation records, and document analysis guidelines.

The structured questionnaire was administered to all 30 participants. It consisted of closed-ended questions and Likert-scale items designed to gather information about students' attitudes toward TBL, their perceptions of its benefits and challenges, and the strategies they used to overcome difficulties in learning English tenses.

The semi-structured interview guide was used to explore students' experiences and opinions in greater depth. Classroom observation records were used to document students' engagement and participation during the eight observed class meetings. Particular attention was given to their involvement in diary writing, storytelling, holiday planning, peer interviews, and problem-solving discussions.

Document analysis guidelines were used to examine the teaching module and lesson plans employed during the instructional process. These documents provided contextual information about the organization of TBL activities and the teaching of English tenses.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach to identify and interpret patterns in students' perceptions and experiences of TBL. The analysis focused on three aspects of the research: the benefits of TBL in learning English tenses, the challenges encountered by students, and the strategies they used to overcome those challenges.

First, the researchers organized the information obtained from the questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and instructional documents. The interview responses and observation records were reviewed to identify information relevant to the research questions. Second, the relevant data were classified into three analytical categories: the benefits of using TBL in learning English tenses, the challenges experienced during TBL activities, and the strategies used to overcome those challenges.

Third, the researchers examined similarities and differences among the participants' responses and identified recurring patterns within each category. Relevant interview statements were selected to illustrate students' experiences, while classroom observations and instructional documents provided additional context for interpreting the findings. Finally, the identified patterns were interpreted in relation to the research questions and discussed in connection with relevant previous studies. This process provided a descriptive account of students' perceptions of TBL and the ways they responded to difficulties in learning English tenses.

### 3.6 Method of Presenting Research Results

The research findings were presented descriptively and organized thematically according to the research objectives. The presentation was divided into three main themes: the benefits of using TBL in learning English tenses, the challenges experienced by students, and the strategies employed to overcome those challenges.

Within each theme, the findings were explained through narrative descriptions supported by selected quotations from participants' interview responses. The quotations illustrated students' experiences and provided evidence for the interpretations presented by the researchers. The findings were then discussed in relation to relevant

theories and previous studies to explain how the participants' experiences corresponded with existing research.

## 4. Result And Discussion

### 4.1 Results

#### 4.1.1 The Benefits of TBL

**Task-Based Learning is effective and helpful**

Task-Based learning provides meaningful activities which can force students to stay active during the learning process. The implementation of Task-Based Learning produces meaningful education outcomes and specifically demonstrates substantial positive changes in students' grammar proficiency (Ananda & Aniza, 2025). The findings of this study reveal that first-semester university students in Universitas Pamulang generally hold positive perceptions toward the implementation of Task-Based Learning in learning English tenses. It supports students in understanding English tenses more easily and clearly by providing meaningful and structured learning activities. Student 1 declared: "I think the implementation of Task-Based Learning was effective and helpful. It made learning English tenses more interesting because I learned through tasks and real examples instead of only focusing on theory" (Student 1)

The student 1 argue that TBL in learning tenses is effective and helpful since learning through tasks and real-life examples makes the learning process more meaningful compared to traditional theory-based instruction. It also shows that Task-Based Learning can increase students' interest and engagement, as it provides practical experiences that help him better understand and apply grammatical concepts. Student 1 explained that Task-Based Learning was "effective and helpful" because learning English tenses became more interesting through tasks and real-life examples instead of focusing only on theory. This finding suggests that authentic learning activities increased the student's engagement and motivation during grammar instruction. The participant's perception is consistent with the study conducted by Ananda and Asiza (2025), who found that implementing Task-Based Learning significantly improved university students' grammar proficiency because learners actively used grammatical structures while completing meaningful tasks. Their study concluded that task-based activities made grammar learning more engaging and helped students understand grammar through practical language use rather than through isolated rule memorization.

**Task-Based Learning creates fun and engaging learning environments.**

Besides providing meaningful activities, task-based learning activities also create fun and engaging learning environment. Park et al. (2019) found that performance-based rewards significantly increased students' motivation, engagement, and autonomy within a game-based TBL environment. It suggests that incorporating performance-based rewards into game-based TBL activities can create a more engaging and student-centered learning environment. By strengthening learners' motivation, participation, and sense of autonomy, such strategies may also contribute to improved collaboration and overall learning outcomes. Student 2 described that: "I think learning English tenses this way is fun and interesting, because I'm not just completing the task, but I have to make stories and it's interesting. Besides expressing ourselves, I could also implement those tenses in a real text, such as storytelling or even making plans" (Student 2)

This statement shows that the student finds learning English tenses more meaningful when it is connected to creative and practical activities. Rather

than only finishing exercises, the student enjoys making stories, which increases engagement and motivation in learning. The comment also suggests that storytelling helps the student understand how tenses are used in real communication contexts, not just as grammar rules. In addition, the student recognizes the usefulness of applying tenses in authentic tasks such as storytelling and planning, indicating that the learning activity supports both language accuracy and self-expression. Overall, this response reflects positive perceptions toward interactive and contextualized grammar learning. The results of this study are in line with previous research (Ananda & Asiza, 2025; Hamid et al., 2024; Nurhayati, 2019), which found that Task-Based Learning promotes active engagement and improves learners' grammatical understanding through meaningful tasks.

**Task-Based Learning encourages interactive and creative learning.**

Creativity and interactivity are also important features that emerge from students' experiences with Task-Based Learning. By placing language learners in various real-life situations, they are encouraged to use the language as a tool to achieve specific goals, thereby engaging in interactive communication (Sholeh, Salija, & Sahril, 2021). Rather than learning English tenses through memorization and isolated exercises, students are encouraged to engage in meaningful activities that involve imagination, collaboration, and communication. This combination makes the learning process more dynamic, enjoyable, and engaging, as students actively use the language while also expressing their ideas in creative ways. Student 3 declared: "I think Task-Based Learning is very creative because I can learn English tenses through different activities, such as creating stories, role-playing, and making presentations. These activities allow us to use our imagination and express our own ideas, so learning grammar does not feel boring. It is also helpful because I can understand the use of tenses more easily when applying them in creative tasks." (Student 3)

This statement highlights that Task-Based Learning is perceived as both creative and interactive in supporting the learning of English tenses. The student emphasizes that activities such as story creation, role-playing, and presentations allow learners to actively participate in the learning process rather than passively receiving information. The "creative" aspect is reflected in the use of imagination and personal expression, which helps make grammar learning more engaging and less monotonous. Meanwhile, the "interactive" element is shown through communication and engagement with tasks that require students to use language in meaningful contexts. Overall, the comment suggests that Task-Based Learning enhances both enjoyment and understanding by combining creativity with active interaction.

**4.1.2 The Challenges of Using Task-Based Learning in learning English Tenses.**

**Difficulty using Correct Tenses**

The findings reveal that although Task-Based Learning (TBL) was generally perceived as engaging and effective, students also encountered challenges in applying English tenses correctly during task completion. In particular, many students reported difficulties in selecting and consistently using the appropriate tense while performing communicative tasks such as role-plays, writing activities, and presentations. This suggests that while TBL promotes active language use, it may also place cognitive demands on learners, especially in grammar accuracy

when support or preparation is limited. One of the most common challenges faced by students in learning grammar through Task-Based Learning (TBL) was the difficulty in selecting and applying the correct tense during activities. Since TBL emphasizes communication and task completion, students were often required to use grammar spontaneously, which sometimes led to confusion between similar tense forms. Student 1 acknowledged that Task-Based Learning was engaging; however, the participant also experienced difficulty when completing tasks without sufficient grammar preparation. The student stated. Student 1 mentioned that: "To be honest, Task-Based Learning (TBL) for English tenses is engaging, but I faced some challenges. The toughest was the pressure of tackling tasks without enough grammar warm-up, I often mixed up past perfect with simple past during role-plays and felt unsure." (Student 1)

This statement indicates that although TBL encourages active participation, insufficient pre-task grammar support may lead to confusion, particularly when distinguishing between similar tenses such as past perfect and simple past. The participant's experience suggests that learners may struggle with accuracy when they are required to produce language spontaneously. This finding aligns with Ellis (2003), who notes that while task-based instruction promotes fluency, learners may still require focused attention to form to ensure grammatical accuracy

**Limited Grammar and Vocabulary Mastery**

Although TBL encourages active learning, students reported difficulties in recalling tense forms, constructing sentences, and selecting appropriate vocabulary during task performance. This indicates that insufficient grammatical knowledge and lexical resources can hinder learners' confidence and fluency when engaging in communicative activities. To begin with, Student 2 highlighted difficulties in remembering different types of tenses and auxiliary verbs. Student 2 stated: "My challenges or difficulties are about to use types of tenses because there many types of it, so sometimes it's difficult to remember, like how to use had, has, have, have been, had been, was, were, etc." (Student 2)

This response indicates that the complexity of English tense structures and auxiliary verbs creates confusion for learners, especially when they are required to apply them spontaneously in tasks. The difficulty in distinguishing between forms such as has/have/had and was/were suggests that students still require stronger foundational grammar knowledge. This finding aligns with recent research by Ridwan et al. (2024), who found that although Task-Based Language Teaching improves learners' engagement and grammar performance, students still struggle when applying grammatical structures spontaneously due to insufficient internalization of tense forms.

**Low Confidence in Speaking and Presenting**

Task-Based Learning often involves presentations, discussions, and question-and-answer sessions. For some students, these speaking activities became a challenge because they felt nervous, lacked confidence, and were afraid of making mistakes in front of others. The findings indicate that another challenge faced by students in Task-Based Learning (TBL) is low confidence in speaking and presenting English tenses. Although TBL encourages active participation through presentations, storytelling, and question-and-answer sessions, several students reported feeling uncomfortable, nervous, and less

confident when required to speak in front of others. This suggests that while TBL promotes communicative practice, affective factors such as anxiety and fear of judgment can influence students' willingness to participate orally. To begin with, Student 3 expressed discomfort during the presentation and Q&A stage of Task-Based Learning activities. The student stated: "The downside is, after the writing task, there's usually a presentation and Q&A session. As a passive student, I find this part quite uncomfortable. It' s not that I'm shy or afraid of being wrong, more like afraid of being judged." (Student 3)

This response indicates that the challenge is not necessarily linguistic difficulty but psychological pressure related to evaluation and peer judgment. The fear of being judged can reduce students' willingness to speak, even when they have prepared written work. This finding is consistent with recent research by Liu and Jackson (2023), who found that evaluation anxiety and fear of negative peer judgment significantly reduce students' willingness to communicate in EFL classroom presentations

**Task and Time Challenges**

The findings indicate that another challenge faced by students in Task-Based Learning (TBL) is task and time-related difficulties, particularly in understanding task instructions and completing activities within limited time. These challenges suggest that while TBL promotes active and meaningful learning, unclear task design and time constraints can negatively affect students' performance and accuracy in using English tenses.

Some students also experienced difficulties related to the task design and classroom time limitations. Certain tasks were considered unclear at the beginning, while limited time caused students to feel rushed during activities. To begin with, Student 4 reported difficulty in understanding task instructions, which led to overthinking when selecting appropriate tenses. The student stated: "Some tasks felt unclear at first, leading me to over think tense choices." (Student 4).

This response indicates that unclear task instructions can create confusion and cognitive overload, causing learners to focus excessively on grammatical accuracy rather than meaning. As a result, students may hesitate or overanalyze tense selection during task completion. This finding is consistent with Ellis (2023), who emphasizes that unclear task design can reduce task effectiveness because learners may struggle to identify the intended communicative goal.

**4.1.3 The Ways to Overcome the Challenges**

**Reviewing Material**

One of the strategies employed by the participant to overcome the challenges encountered during Task-Based Learning was reviewing the learning materials independently after class. The participant explained that revisiting the lesson content, rereading class notes, and studying the lecturer's explanations enabled them to strengthen their understanding of English tenses. This response indicates that the participant actively engaged in self-directed learning to address areas of difficulty rather than relying solely on classroom instruction. The student 1 stated: "I dealt with these difficulties by reviewing the learning materials after class, rereading my notes, and studying the explanations provided by the lecturer. This helped me better understand the English tenses that I initially found confusing." (Student 1)

The students' responses demonstrate the use of a self-directed learning strategy

to overcome difficulties in learning English tenses. By reviewing the learning materials after class, rereading notes, and revisiting the lecturer's explanations, the students actively reinforced the knowledge acquired during classroom activities. These behaviors suggest that the students recognized gaps in their understanding and took the initiative to address them through independent study. Rather than perceiving the challenges encountered during Task-Based Learning (TBL) as obstacles, the students viewed them as opportunities to revisit and strengthen their understanding of grammatical concepts.

It is in line with Nurhayati (2019) who found that students perceived task-based learning as beneficial for developing a deeper understanding of grammar through continuous engagement with learning materials and reflective activities.

**Practicing More**

Another strategy used by the participants to overcome difficulties in Task-Based Learning (TBL) for learning English tenses was increasing practice. The students emphasized that repeated practice helped them become more familiar with grammar structures, improve fluency, and reduce anxiety when performing tasks such as writing and speaking. In addition to practicing exercises, they also engaged in activities such as reviewing tenses before writing, preparing presentations, practicing storytelling, and building confidence through continuous exposure to English use. This is reflected in the following statements: Student 2 stated: “I improve my understanding of English tenses by practicing more exercises regularly. Through continuous practice, I become more familiar with different tense forms and learn how to apply them correctly in various contexts.” (Student 2)

The student’s responses show that consistent practice plays an important role in helping them cope with challenges in learning English tenses. Student 2 highlights the importance of doing more exercises, indicating that repetition helps strengthen understanding of grammar structures.

This finding aligns with previous research highlighting that repeated practice is a key factor in mastering English grammar and improving communicative performance in Task-Based Learning environments. Nurhayati (2019) found that task-based activities combined with continuous practice help students internalize grammatical structures more effectively, particularly when learners are given opportunities to revise and reuse language forms.

**Motivating Themselves**

Rather than focusing solely on grammar difficulties, the participants emphasized the importance of enjoying the learning process, being patient with themselves, and viewing mistakes as opportunities for improvement. Their responses suggest that intrinsic motivation played an essential role in helping them persist through challenges and continue developing their understanding of English tenses. This is reflected in the following statements. Student 3 claimed: “In my opinion, the best way to overcome the challenges in learning English tenses is by enjoying the learning process instead of feeling pressured. This mindset helps me stay motivated, makes learning more enjoyable, and encourages me to keep improving even when I encounter difficulties.” (Student 3)

It is in line with Hamid et al. (2024) found that task-based grammar activities encouraged students to remain motivated because the meaningful and interactive nature of the tasks enabled them to view

challenges as opportunities for learning rather than obstacles.

**Seeking Help from Lecturer and Classmates**

The other strategy employed by the students to overcome the challenges encountered during Task-Based Learning (TBL) was seeking assistance from lecturers and friends. Student 4 said: "Whenever I did not understand the lesson or felt confused about using English tenses, I asked my lecturer or my friends for clarification. Their explanations helped me understand the material better and solve the difficulties I encountered during the learning process." (Student 4)

It is supported by recent research conducted by Yang et al (2022), who found that teacher feedback based on self-regulated learning significantly improved EFL students' writing performance and encouraged learners to use more effective learning strategies. Likewise, Zahra et al (2025), in their review of empirical studies on peer feedback, concluded that teacher guidance combined with peer feedback promotes grammatical accuracy, learner autonomy, and deeper reflection on language use.

**4.2 Discussion**

The qualitative findings of this study demonstrate a clear alignment between student experiences and established Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) frameworks, while also illuminating key pedagogical tensions inherent in grammar instruction. The positive perceptions reported by students regarding contextualized learning strongly corroborate empirical research by Ananda and Aniza (2025), who found that TBL significantly enhances grammar proficiency by requiring learners to actively deploy structural forms within communicative tasks rather than relying on isolated rule memorization. By mapping grammatical concepts directly onto functional activities like storytelling and future planning, TBL lowers cognitive abstraction and grounds rule learning in authentic usage. Furthermore, the high levels of enjoyment and creative agency expressed by participants support findings by Park et al. (2019) and Sholeh, Salija, and Sahril (2021), indicating that performance-oriented and collaborative tasks enhance student motivation, engagement, and learner autonomy.

However, a critical theoretical tension emerges when contrasting the communicative benefits of TBL with the cognitive challenges reported by learners. While TBL naturally prioritizes communicative fluency, the empirical data reveal that spontaneous task production without adequate pre-task framing creates significant cognitive overload for lower-proficiency learners. As Ellis (2003, 2023) emphasizes, task-based instruction requires a delicate balance between meaning and form; without explicit focus-on-form (FonF) pre-tasks or grammar warm-ups, learners often struggle to access complex, multi-word auxiliary structures under real-time processing demands. This is further compounded by task design ambiguities, which force learners to allocate valuable working memory resources to deciphering instructions rather than focusing on accurate tense selection (Ellis, 2023). These findings align with recent empirical work by Ridwan et al. (2024), who observed that while TBL improves overall engagement, learners frequently experience accuracy breakdowns during live production due to an incomplete internalization of complex tense paradigms.

Additionally, the results demonstrate that task performance is heavily modulated by affective variables and social dynamics. Student anxiety

during post-task presentations and Q&A sessions highlights the psychological burden of public performance, directly aligning with research by Liu and Jackson (2023) on foreign language classroom anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Even when students demonstrate written mastery of tenses, fear of peer judgment acts as a severe affective filter that limits oral participation. Nevertheless, the findings show that students do not remain passive when encountering these obstacles. Instead, they activate sophisticated metacognitive, cognitive, affective, and social coping strategies. The self-directed review behaviors and deliberate practice routines reported by participants mirror findings by Nurhayati (2019), who noted that TBL acts as a catalyst for autonomous learning by prompting students to independently seek supplementary grammar input outside class. Furthermore, the active reliance on lecturer clarification and peer assistance aligns with findings by Yang et al. (2022) and Zahra et al. (2025), confirming that targeted instructor feedback and collaborative peer interaction provide essential scaffolding that transforms challenging communicative tasks into manageable, accuracy-building learning opportunities.

## 5. Conclusion

Drawing on the results and discussion, it is clearly seen that first-semester university students generally have positive perceptions toward the implementation of Task-Based Learning (TBL) in learning English tenses. The students viewed TBL as an effective and helpful approach that creates a fun, engaging, interactive, and creative learning environment. Through task-based activities such as storytelling, writing, and presentations, students were able to learn English tenses in more meaningful and contextual ways, which increased their motivation and participation in classroom activities.

However, despite its positive contributions, the implementation of Task-Based Learning also presents several challenges. The students experienced difficulties in using correct tenses, limited grammar and vocabulary mastery, low confidence in speaking and presenting, and task and time constraints. These challenges indicate that although TBL supports communicative and active learning, students still require sufficient linguistic competence, confidence, and learning support to perform tasks effectively.

In addition, the students developed several strategies to overcome these challenges. They reported reviewing learning materials, practicing more frequently, motivating themselves, and seeking help from lecturers and classmates. These strategies show that learners attempt to take responsibility for their own learning and improve their performance through both independent and collaborative efforts.

Overall, the findings suggest that Task-Based Learning is a beneficial approach for teaching English tenses, but its effectiveness depends on the availability of proper guidance, adequate language support, and active learner engagement.

However, this study is limited in scope due to small sample size, which may not represent the broader population of English language learners. future researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies on task-based learning with different contexts, participants, or research designs. They may also explore the effectiveness of specific types of tasks or compare task-based learning with other teaching methods to enrich the understanding of grammar teaching and learning.

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