ARTICLE

The Effectiveness of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in Improving Vocabulary Mastery of Senior High School Students

A Qualitative Descriptive Study

Mobile Learning Innovation

Vocabulary Development

Student Achievement

AUTHOR

Linda Tiwi Diarni

NIM. 2211221021

English Education Department
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
UIMSYA Universitas KH. MMUKTAR SYAFA'AT
Banyuwangi

Article

The Effectiveness of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in Improving Vocabulary Mastery

By :

LINDA TIWI DIARNI
NIM: 2211221021

ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
FACULTY TARBIYAH AND TEACHERS TRAINING
UNIVERSITAS KH. MUKHTAR SYAFAAT
(UIMSYA)
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By:

Linda TiwiDiarni
NIM. 2211221021

ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF TARBIYAH AND TEACHERS TRAINING
UNIVERSITAS KH MUKHTAR SYAFAAT (UIMSYA)
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Acknowledge,

Head of Study
Program

Ahmad Farurk, M.Pd.
NIPY. 3151611058801

Advisor

Ahmad Farurk, M.Pd.
NIPY. 3151611058801

Dean of FTK

Dr. Zulfi Zulmala Dwi Andriani, SS, MA
NIPY. 3150722128401

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

MOTTO

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do."

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Allah SWT for His endless mercy, guidance, and blessings throughout my journey. It is lovingly dedicated to my beloved parents for their unconditional love, prayers, sacrifices, and unwavering support; to my supervisors for their invaluable guidance, patience, and encouragement; to all of my lecturers for the knowledge and inspiration they have shared; and to my dear friends for their support, motivation, and unforgettable companionship. May this achievement be a meaningful beginning to contribute positively to others.

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY OF THESIS

Bismillahirrohmanirrohim Here I am,

Name	: Linda Tiwi Diarni
NIM	: 2211221021
Study Program	: English Education Department

Declare that:

1. This article has never submitted to any other educatin instituton for any other academic degree
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Declator,



Linda Tiwi Diarni

NIM: 2211221021

FOREWORD

Alhamdulillah, all praise be to Allah SWT, this thesis can be completed thanks to His grace, blessings, and love.

May peace and blessings always be upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who is a role model for his people.

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The author hopes that this paper can be beneficial, add to readers' knowledge, and serve as learning material. With all its limitations, the author realizes that this paper is far from perfect. Therefore, the

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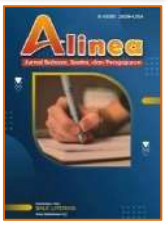

The Effectiveness of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in Improving Vocabulary Mastery

*1 Linda Tiwi Diarni, 2Ahmad Faruk
1,2KH. Mukhtar Syafa'at University, Banyuwangi, Indonesia
*Corresponds email: lindatiwi74@gmail.com

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Abstract
The study entitled "The Effectiveness of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in Improving Vocabulary Mastery" aims to determine the extent to which the use of mobile technology can contribute significantly to improving students' English vocabulary mastery. A qualitative approach with a descriptive design was used in this study. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving students and English teachers who used mobile-based learning applications such as Duolingo and Quizlet. Data analysis was conducted interactively, including data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing, with triangulation techniques used to ensure validity. The findings show that MALL significantly improves students' vocabulary mastery, including comprehension, pronunciation, and the ability to use vocabulary in context. In addition, MALL has been shown to increase student motivation to learn through features such as gamification, instant feedback, and flexibility in learning time and location. Teachers also experienced positive impacts, particularly in creating a more effective, diverse, and student-centered learning environment, as well as in shifting their role towards that of a learning facilitator. In conclusion, this study shows that MALL is an effective, innovative, and relevant strategy for improving English vocabulary learning and meeting the needs of learners in the digital age.

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Introduction

The use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in English language learning has become an increasingly common social phenomenon in various contexts, especially in formal and informal learning environments (Judijanto 2025; Figueiredo 2023) . This social fact has emerged in response to the development of digital technology, which is closely related to modern society. Smartphones, learning applications, and digital platforms have become part of students' daily activities, so their use in improving vocabulary mastery is considered highly relevant and effective (Polakova and Klimova 2022; Salsabila et al. 2025) . Socially, MALL provides students with the opportunity to learn vocabulary anytime and anywhere, without the time and space constraints of conventional learning (Al-Ahdal and Alharbi 2021) . This results in a more flexible and individualized learning environment where students can access materials according to their own learning needs and preferences.

Additionally, the existence of language learning applications such as Duolingo, Memrise, Babbel, Quizlet, and others has created an engaging and interactive learning environment (Septarianto 2023) . Through gamification features such as points, levels, and daily challenges, these apps increase students' motivation to learn because they want to continue expanding their vocabulary (Sadeghi et al. 2022; Dinihari et al. 2025) . From a social perspective, user interaction can also highlight positive skills and teamwork in improving language proficiency. Not only that, the use of audio, video, and visual contexts in MALL applications helps students understand language more concretely, so that the words they learn are easier to understand and apply in oral communication.

In the context of education, MALL training also strengthens the relationship between teachers and students. Teachers are no longer just a source of information; they are also facilitators who help students optimize their digital learning (Habibi et al. 2025) . This project shows a transformation in the social structure of learning, where technology provides space for students to be more active and critical in developing language skills. In general, the social facts about the effectiveness of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) show that the use of mobile technology has contributed significantly to vocabulary improvement, as well as the development of new learning styles that are more modern, adaptive, and in line with the characteristics of the current generation.

Previous research on the effectiveness of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in improving vocabulary has yielded positive results in terms of language learning ability. A relevant study found that the use of mobile applications such as Duolingo and Memories significantly helped students learn new languages through interactive learning (Maghfurin et al. 2025) . The study found that gamification features helped increase students' motivation to learn more. Other research found that mobile learning allows students to access learning materials whenever and wherever they want, increasing their exposure to English and enabling them to learn new words faster (Abduljawad and Ahmad 2023; Khabib and Muliana 2024) . Students can understand the meaning of words contextually and naturally by using audio and visual technology in learning applications.

Other studies show that MALL can help students overcome barriers to learning foreign languages by allowing them to study independently without relying on school situations (Chen 2025) . Interactions through quizzes, word games, and daily challenges create an engaging learning environment, encouraging students to continue developing their vocabulary. Several studies have also found changes in the role of teachers as facilitators, where teachers help students use applications and integrate mobile learning outcomes into classroom activities (Akram et al. 2022) . As a result, mobile technology does not replace traditional education but serves as a tool that enhances student understanding.

Overall, findings from previous studies indicate that MALL training has a significant positive impact on vocabulary acquisition in English language learning (Wijayatiningsih et al. 2025) . This shows that mobile technology is an effective learning medium that meets the needs and preferences of today's digital generation. MALL not only improves learning outcomes but also creates a more flexible, interactive, and enjoyable learning environment, thereby making a significant contribution to the development of language skills in the context of globalization, including foreign language learning, particularly English.

The main objective of the study entitled "The Effectiveness of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in Improving Vocabulary Mastery" is to determine the extent to which the use of mobile technology can contribute significantly to improving students' English vocabulary mastery. This objective is based on the strong argument that in today's digital age, mobile devices have become an integral part of students' daily lives, making their use as a learning medium an

appropriate and relevant step (Ariani et al. 2023) . Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) provides a flexible, interactive, and easily accessible learning environment anytime and anywhere, giving students the opportunity to gain exposure to new vocabulary more intensively than conventional learning, which is limited by space and time. Additionally, features in mobile applications such as gamification, audio-visual elements, and context-based exercises are believed to enhance the appeal of learning and make it easier for students to remember and use vocabulary communicatively.

With the change in learning styles of students in the modern era who prefer digital media, the purpose of this study is also based on the need to present a learning model that suits the characteristics of the current generation. If the application of MALL proves to be effective, it will provide empirical evidence that mobile technology can be an alternative solution in improving the quality of English language learning, especially in the field of vocabulary. Therefore, this study is urgent as an effort to support educational innovation and optimize the potential of technology in the learning process. The results of this research are expected to make a real contribution to teachers, students, and educational institutions in developing more modern, adaptive, and effective learning strategies to improve students' English language skills.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore how Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) contributes to students' English vocabulary development. A qualitative approach was selected to capture participants' lived experiences, perceptions of mobile application use, and observed changes in learning behaviors during the instructional process. The participants were purposively selected secondary-level students who had access to mobile devices and were actively engaged in English learning activities, ensuring their relevance to the research focus (Adlini et al. 2022).

Data were generated through semi-structured in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis conducted over a period of several weeks to allow sustained engagement with the learning process. The interviews were designed to elicit students' perspectives regarding motivation, usability, perceived benefits, and challenges in using mobile applications. Observations focused on how students interacted with mobile learning media, including the frequency and duration of use, as well as observable indications of vocabulary development during learning activities. Documentation, such as learning logs, screenshots of progress, and instructional materials, was also collected to support data triangulation. During the study, students used mobile learning applications such as Duolingo and Quizlet as supplementary tools both inside and outside the classroom, particularly for vocabulary practice, repetition, and contextual language exposure.

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive and iterative approach, involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, following the framework of qualitative data analysis proposed by Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña (2014). The analysis process began with open coding to identify initial categories from interview transcripts and observation field notes, followed by axial coding to explore relationships among categories, and selective coding to generate overarching themes. Themes were developed inductively through constant comparison across data sources to ensure analytical rigor and depth of interpretation.

To ensure trustworthiness, this study employed triangulation by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documentation, as well as member checking to validate participants' responses. These strategies align with qualitative validation techniques suggested by Yvonna S.

Lincoln and Egon G. Guba (1985). Through this rigorous methodological approach, the study provides a comprehensive and contextually grounded understanding of how MALL is utilized as an effective strategy to support students' vocabulary learning (Achjar et al. 2023).

Results And Discussion

MALL Significantly Improves Vocabulary Mastery

The first finding of this study is that the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) provides significant benefits in terms of improving student vocabulary. The first problem identified was a lack of understanding among students when learning was conducted using traditional methods such as memorization and written exercises. Based on initial observations, it was clear that students found it increasingly difficult to retain their vocabulary knowledge in the long term and were less motivated to continue independent learning outside of school. When mobile applications such as Duolingo and Quizlet were used, there was a significant change in the speed at which students learned new words and their ability to understand and apply them in context. To address this issue, a survey was distributed to English teachers and several students who actively used these applications. Teachers reported that there was a clear improvement in students' ability to recognize, pronounce, and remember vocabulary after regularly using the applications. This was explained by an experienced English teacher, who stated.

> *"Previously, students often forgot new vocabulary, but after using the application, they remember more quickly and are even able to apply it in sentences without me asking."*

In addition, students believe that the audio, visual, and instructional features help them understand vocabulary more deeply. One student stated that the application facilitates the learning process because it can be done anytime at their convenience. In general, the findings show that MALL significantly improves students' vocabulary through learning methods that are more interesting, interactive, and flexible than traditional methods.

To facilitate readers' visual understanding of the research findings, the authors formulated several key indicators that represent the impact of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning on students' vocabulary mastery. These indicators were compiled based on observational data, teacher and student survey results, and excerpts from learning experiences. Furthermore, the authors present the following indicator images as a summary of the research's key findings, clarifying the relationship between technology and student learning outcomes.

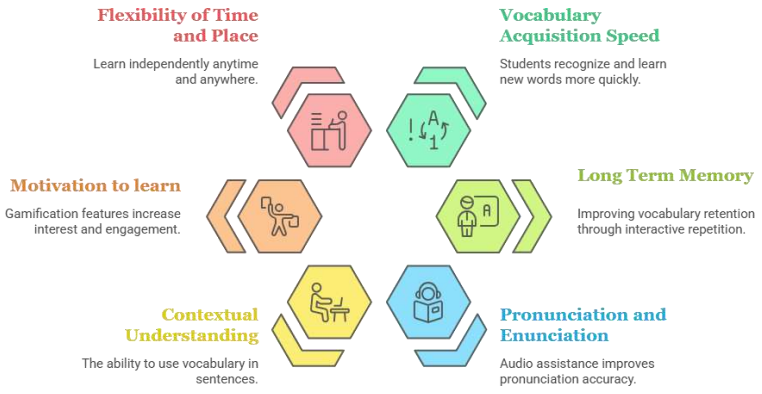

Figure 1; Benefits of Vocabulary Learning

Based on the formulated indicators, it can be concluded that the implementation of MALL significantly contributes to improving students' vocabulary mastery. MALL not only accelerates the process of recognizing and remembering words, but also improves pronunciation, understanding of meaning, and the ability to use vocabulary in context. The flexibility of learning time and audio-visual features encourage students' motivation and independence in learning. Thus, MALL is an effective strategic alternative to conventional methods that tend to be passive and less sustainable. These results reinforce the role of mobile technology as a language learning tool that is adaptive, contextual, and relevant to the needs of today's students.

MALL Increases Student Learning Motivation

The second finding of this study shows that the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has a significant impact on increasing student learning motivation, especially when learning vocabulary. The first problem identified was the lack of student interest in vocabulary exercises done manually using textbooks or worksheets, which can sometimes be boring and monotonous. Many students find it difficult to maintain consistency in learning because the pace of learning is slow and does not provide immediate feedback. When mobile applications with gamification features such as points, levels, timers, and visual capture began to be used, there was a significant shift in the learning process of students. To complete this task, interviews were conducted with several students and English teachers. Teachers explained that students became more active in asking questions, more enthusiastic about participating in exercises, and showed increased discipline in working on vocabulary every day. In addition, students understood that the app's features made the learning process feel like playing, so they didn't have to work as hard as before and just wanted to increase their level. One student made a statement that reinforced this finding,

> *"Learning vocabulary using the application is more exciting because there are points and levels. I am motivated to keep opening the application so I don't lose my streak."*

In addition, several users claimed that the app's notifications helped them stay consistent in their daily activities. Overall, the results of the study show that student motivation to learn increased significantly because MALL provides a learning environment that is more enjoyable, interactive, and suitable for the current digital generation.

Teachers Feel Positive Impact in the Learning Process

The results of the study show that the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has a positive impact on the English learning process. Previous problems included low student participation, monotonous classroom routines, and most importantly, ensuring that each individual participated actively when teachers implemented mobile learning applications. Teachers believe that MALL not only helps students but also improves the effectiveness of teaching methods in schools. This is evidenced by how students understand new concepts more quickly, are more open to questions, and are more active in following learning instructions. With audio, visual, and personalized learning features in the application, teachers can make learning more varied and less dependent on textbooks or traditional methods.

Interviews with English teachers reinforce this finding. Teachers stated that MALL helps them provide exercises that can be accessed at any time, so students do not have to rely on classroom

learning. Teachers also acknowledged that the level of responsibility among students has increased significantly. During the interview, a teacher said,

> *"students now understand the meaning of words more quickly because they have tried the exercises in the application, so I only need to deepen the material and give examples in a sentence."*

This quote shows that MALL not only helps students express themselves, but also makes the learning and teaching process in schools more efficient.

In general, the interviews showed that teachers experienced positive changes in the learning process, the implementation of learning activities, and the results achieved by students. MALL provides space for teachers to develop more creative, interactive, and relevant strategies to meet the needs of modern learners.

Research Discussion

MALL Significantly Improves Vocabulary Mastery

Research results on vocabulary expansion using Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) show that mobile technology can overcome the weaknesses of traditional learning methods, which are increasingly unattractive and do not provide adequate learning opportunities for students. The fact that students can more easily understand and use vocabulary in context after using mobile applications shows that MALL provides a more flexible learning environment. Audio, visual, gamification, and training features enable students to process information more effectively, resulting in a significant increase in retention. This is in line with Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, which states that information conveyed through a combination of visual and verbal means is easier to understand and master because it is processed through two cognitive channels (Tang and Chen 2025) .

In addition, the concept of repeated exposure in behavioral theory states that repeated experiences can increase learning motivation and memory retention (Osei and Bjorklund 2024) . The MALL application also applies the principle of independent learning, where students have control over their learning time, location, and pace, thereby increasing their internal motivation. This is in line with Benson's theory, which states that active participation in the learning process has a significant impact on language acquisition (Mutia 2025) . As a result, the research findings show that the use of MALL not only increases the number of vocabulary words given to students, but also improves the quality of knowledge through a more interactive, flexible, and relevant learning experience.

MALL Increases Student Learning Motivation

The use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) to increase student learning motivation shows that the integration of technology in learning provides a significant psychological boost to students' desire to learn consistently. This motivation is mainly influenced by gamification elements in the application, such as points, levels, streaks, and daily challenges that stimulate a sense of achievement through self-competition. These features provide positive reinforcement, which makes students feel appreciated every time they successfully complete an exercise, encouraging them to continue learning. This interpretation is based on Self-Determination Theory, which states that internal motivation increases when an individual's basic needs for competence, autonomy, and connection are met (SUKMA 2025; Deci and Ryan 2012) . In the context of MALL, this application

provides a sense of competence through level achievement, autonomy through learning flexibility, and connection through score or progress features. In addition, Deterding's theory of Gamification in Education explains that the use of game elements in non-game activities can increase student motivation, focus, and concentration (Triantafyllou et al. 2025) . The findings in this study are also in line with the concept of Immediate Feedback from behaviorism, which asserts that quick feedback can reinforce positive behavior, namely learning discipline. As a result, the interpretation of this concept suggests that MALL not only functions as a learning tool but also as a psychological mechanism capable of enhancing students' intrinsic motivation. MALL successfully transformed students' perceptions of vocabulary learning from a boring activity into something that triggers excitement and enthusiasm.

Teachers Feel Positive Impact in the Learning Process

The results of the study show that the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is not only beneficial for students but also provides significant benefits for teachers in the vocabulary teaching process. Teachers believe that the use of mobile applications makes the learning process more efficient, structured, and varied compared to traditional learning, which has become monotonous in recent years. Increased student participation and prior knowledge encourage the development of MALL as an effective teaching tool. With the addition of independent learning, rapid learning, and multimedia materials, teachers are no longer just a source of information, but also facilitators who help students learn and develop. This interpretation is in line with Chapelle's theory that technology can improve the quality of language learning through more intensive interaction, accessibility, and flexibility (Chapelle 2009; Godwin-Jones 2021) .

Furthermore, Constructivism theory (Vygotsky) supports this idea by stating that learning becomes more enjoyable when students can actively develop their knowledge through experience, while teachers act as facilitators in the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Lee and Chen 2025) . In the context of MALL, students have conducted independent exploration through the application prior to face-to-face learning, allowing teachers to focus on enhancing learning through more personalized interactions. This concept is also relevant to the concept of Blended Learning, where a combination of digital learning and practical activities can increase the effectiveness of the learning process (Bhadri and Patil 2022) . According to this interpretation, MALL provides space for teachers to adopt a more creative, flexible, and responsive approach to the needs of the digital generation, resulting in a more comfortable, efficient, and effective learning process.

Conclusions

Based on the research findings and analysis, it can be concluded that Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has a significant and positive impact on English language learning. First, MALL has the potential to significantly improve students' vocabulary. The use of mobile applications with audio, visual, and language contexts helps students understand, master, and apply vocabulary more effectively than traditional learning methods. The flexible and interactive learning environment makes students more active and independent in the learning process, which ultimately improves vocabulary retention.

Based on the findings and analysis, this study cautiously concludes that Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) demonstrates a positive contribution to English language learning. First, MALL appears to support the improvement of students' vocabulary acquisition. The integration of audio, visual, and contextual features in mobile applications facilitates deeper understanding and

more effective use of vocabulary compared to conventional approaches, while its flexible and interactive nature encourages greater learner autonomy and supports vocabulary retention.

Second, MALL is likely to enhance students' learning motivation. The incorporation of gamification elements such as points, levels, and streaks—tends to create a more engaging and enjoyable learning experience, which may foster more consistent participation, increased enthusiasm, and a more goal-oriented learning attitude. In this sense, MALL functions not only as a learning tool but also as a supportive environment for strengthening intrinsic motivation.

Third, from the teacher's perspective, MALL contributes to the overall effectiveness of the instructional process. It enables increased student participation, supports improved learning outcomes, and promotes a more student-centered learning atmosphere. Consequently, the teacher's role shifts toward that of a facilitator who guides and enriches students' learning experiences.

Overall, MALL can be considered a promising and contextually relevant approach to enhancing the quality of English language learning. However, further research is recommended to examine its long-term effectiveness across diverse educational contexts and learner characteristics. In classroom practice, educators are encouraged to integrate MALL strategically, with careful consideration of pedagogical objectives, technological accessibility, and students' learning needs.

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APPENDICES

APPENDICES 1. Letter of Acceptance (LOA)



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LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE (LoA)

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Doi: 10.58218/alinea

The undersigned below:

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Journal	: Alinea: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajaran
Institution	: Bale Literasi

Hereby certifies that the scientific article with the following details:

Author	:	Linda Tiwi Diarni, Ahmad Faruk
Institutions	:	KH. Mukhtar Syafa'at University, Banyuwangi, Indonesia
Title	:	The Effectiveness of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in Improving Vocabulary Mastery
Decision	:	ACCEPTED
Date	:	10 March 2026

has successfully passed all editorial stages, including the initial screening, substantive review by peer reviewers through a double-blind peer review process, and final editing in accordance with academic publishing standards and publication ethics.

We hereby confirm that the article has been accepted for publication in Alinea: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajaran, Volume 6, Number 1, April 2026 Edition, and will be published online on April 29, 2026. This journal is published under the auspices of BALE LITERASI: Research, Training, Educational, Social, and Publication Institute.

Mataram, 15 March 2026
Editor-in-Chief

Herman Wijaya, M.Pd

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APPENDICES 2. Advisory Letter

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PERIODE	20252
JUDUL	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MOBILE-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING MALL IN IMPROVING MASTERY VOCABULARY



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5	20251	27 Desember 2025	27 Desember 2025	PENYUSUNAN CONCLUTION	ACC
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8	20251	18 Desember 2025	18 Desember 2025	Discussion	Revisi
9	20251	16 Desember 2025	16 Desember 2025	Discussion	Revisi
10	20251	09 Desember 2025	09 Desember 2025	Finding	Acc
11	20251	30 November 2025	30 November 2025	finding	revisi
12	20251	25 November 2025	25 November 2025	research gap dan tujuan	revisi
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14	20251	31 Oktober 2025	31 Oktober 2025	introduction	acc
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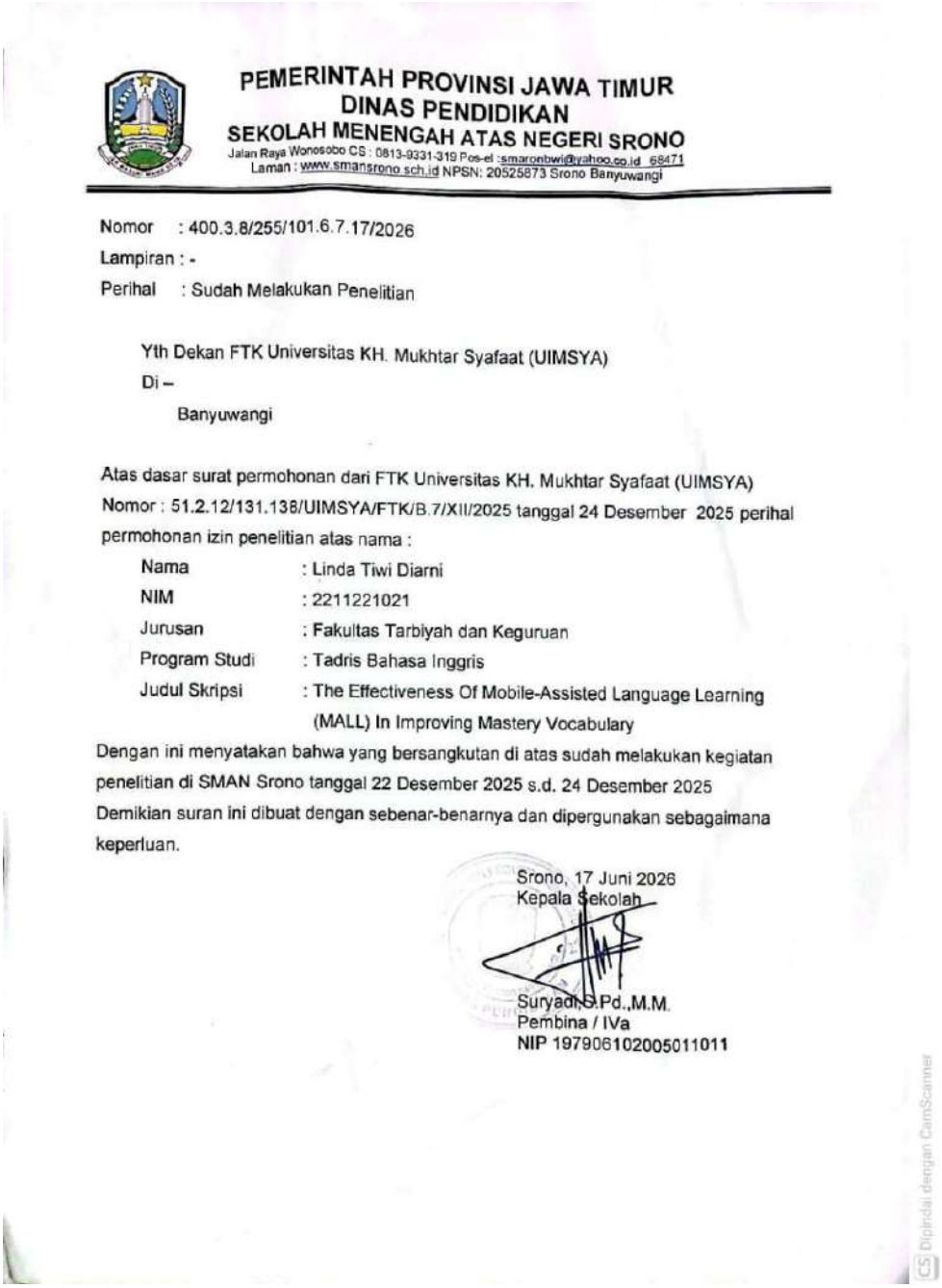

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Nama	: Linda Tiwi Diarni
NIM	: 2211221021
Jurusan	: Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan
Program Studi	: Tadris Bahasa Inggris
Judul Skripsi	: The Effectiveness Of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) In Improving Mastery Vocabulary

Dengan ini menyatakan bahwa yang bersangkutan di atas sudah melakukan kegiatan penelitian di SMAN Srono tanggal 22 Desember 2025 s.d. 24 Desember 2025
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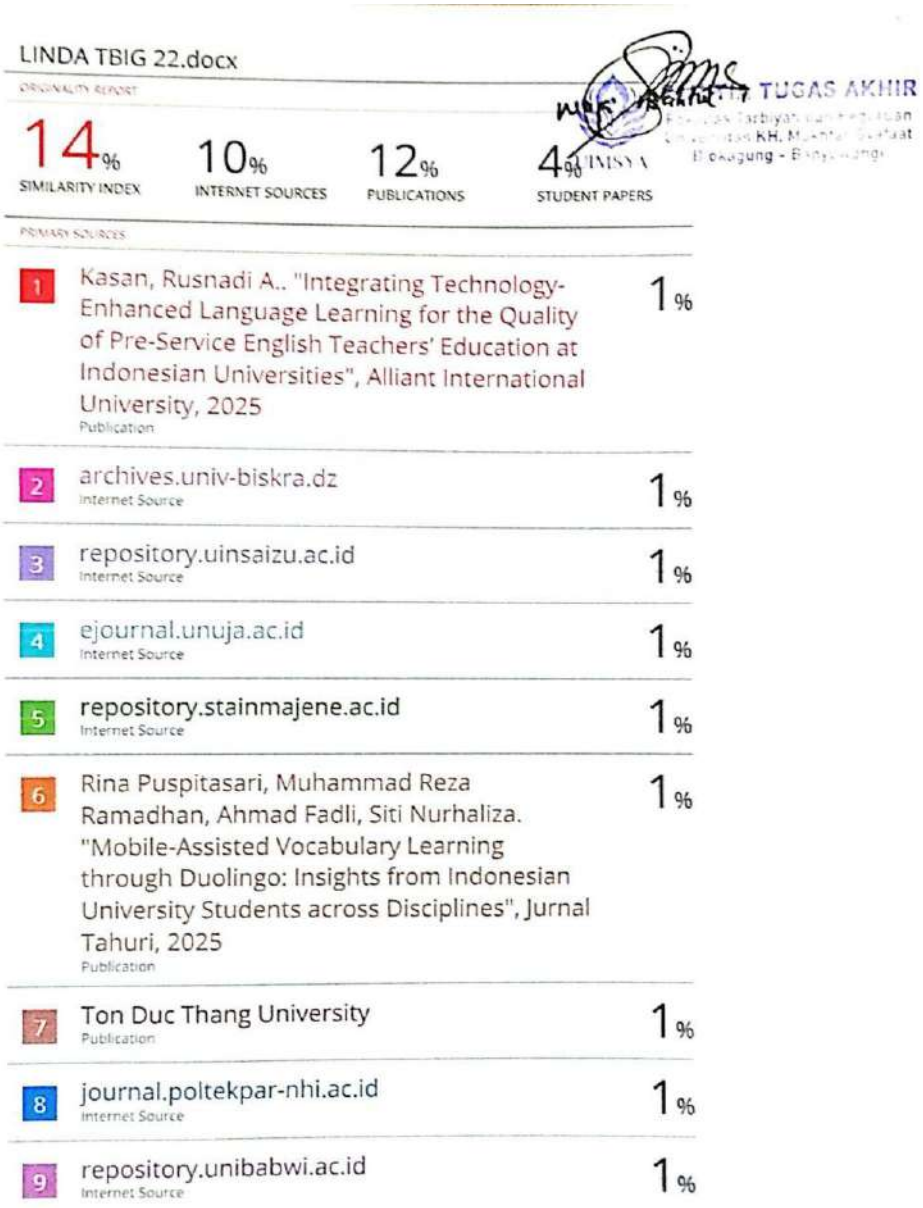

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NAME : Linda Tiwi Diarni
NIM 2211221021
TTL : Mambang 07 July 2004
Alamat : Mambang, Muara Kelingi, Musirawas SUMSEL
Agama : Islam
Prodi : Tadris Bahasa Inggris
Fakultas : Tarbiyah dan Keguruan

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ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

This study explores the effectiveness of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in improving vocabulary mastery among senior high school students. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that MALL enhances students' vocabulary acquisition, learning motivation, and engagement in the learning process.

KEYWORDS

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, Vocabulary Mastery, MALL, Qualitative Study, Senior High School Students

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