

## Reinventing Grammar Pedagogy through Mobile-Assisted Learning: Busuu-Assisted Tense Mastery in an Indonesian Madrasah Tsanawiyah

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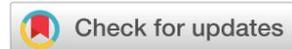
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### ABSTRACT

*This research addresses the persistent challenge of tense instruction in Indonesian madrasah tsanawiyah, where grammar learning is often perceived as rule-heavy and detached from meaningful practice. The study aims to examine the extent to which Busuu-assisted learning can enhance eighth-grade students' English tense mastery and to outline a feasible classroom integration model within a realistic school timetable. A pre-experimental one-group pre-test–post-test design was employed with qualitative approach. The participants were 23 eighth-grade students at MTs DDI Tuppu Pinrang selected from an intact class; however, complete matched pre- and post-test scores were available for 22 students and were used for analysis. Students completed a 30-item multiple-choice grammar test on simple present, simple past, and simple future tenses before and after six weekly Busuu-assisted treatments (two class periods per meeting). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired comparison, applying the Wilcoxon signed-rank test due to non-normal gain scores. The results showed a substantial increase in students' tense mastery from pre-test ( $M = 20.18$ ) to post-test ( $M = 28.23$ ), with a significant pre–post difference ( $p < .001$ ) and a very large effect ( $r \approx 0.88$ ). The findings suggest that structured mobile-assisted practice through Busuu, combined with teacher guidance and error-focused review, can serve as a practical strategy for revitalizing grammar pedagogy in Islamic junior high school contexts.*

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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### KEYWORDS

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning, Busuu-Assisted Learning, Tense Mastery, Grammar Pedagogy, Madrasah Tsanawiyah.

### ARTICLE LICENCE

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### 1. Introduction

In today's digital era, English language teaching is undergoing major transformation due to technological advances and the increasing use of mobile devices in learning (Kukulka-Hulme & Shield, 2008; Stockwell, 2010; Burston, 2015; Rahan & Weda, 2019). However, grammar instruction remains one of the most challenging aspects of English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in Indonesian *madrasah tsanawiyah* where classroom practice often relies on teacher-centered explanation and mechanical exercises (Ellis, 2006; Sofwan & Habibi, 2016; Taib, 2021; Yaumi et al., 2023). Such approaches frequently lead learners to perceive grammar especially tenses as rigid, abstract, and detached from meaningful communication (Al-Seghayer, 2017; Sato & Loewen, 2019; Spada & Lightbown, 2020; Aswad et al., 2019). At the same time, Indonesian Generation Z learners increasingly engage with mobile applications for communication and informal learning, creating a mismatch between students' digital habits and conventional classroom grammar pedagogy. Therefore, integrating Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) into grammar instruction is timely, particularly when it supports digital literacy and classroom relevance in Islamic secondary education (UNESCO, 2017; Al-Attas, 2018; Prihandoko et al., 2019).

Beyond technological readiness, grammar pedagogy in madrasah contexts also needs to align with learners' value orientations and psychological needs. Evidence from faith-based EFL settings in Indonesia suggests that when English learning is perceived as value-concordant supporting autonomy, competence, and relatedness within an Islamic ethos students tend to experience healthier motivational conditions for learning engagement (Fakhrudin et al., 2025; Hasbullah et al., 2025; Suma et al., 2026). Therefore, integrating Busuu as a structured MALL tool in madrasah tsanawiyah may be more pedagogically meaningful when teachers frame its use not only as skills practice but also as responsible, goal-directed learning consistent with the school's values and supportive classroom climate.

A brief review of prior studies suggests that MALL can enhance grammar learning through repeated exposure, flexible practice opportunities, and immediate feedback. Wang et al., (2021) reported that a personalized mobile-assisted system with self-regulated feedback improved grammar outcomes, while Ghorbani and Ebadi (2020) found that mobile-assisted learning supported learners' grammatical development and awareness. Busuu has also been evaluated as a promising application because it provides structured lessons, contextualized examples, and automated corrective feedback that supports independent practice (Rosell-Aguilar, 2018). The strongest contribution of these studies lies in demonstrating that feedback-rich mobile practice can facilitate grammar learning beyond classroom time.

Nevertheless, two key limitations remain. First, most MALL and Busuu-related studies have focused on adult learners or university contexts, while evidence from secondary-level learners in Indonesian *madrasah tsanawiyah* is still limited. Second, many studies report learning gains without offering classroom-based evidence on how a mobile application can be pedagogically integrated into regular instruction using a realistic timetable and constrained school time allocation. Addressing these limitations is important because grammar learning in madrasah contexts requires practical, replicable teaching models that fit school schedules and support learners who often struggle with tense accuracy.

Accordingly, this study investigates Busuu-assisted tense mastery in an Indonesian *madrasah tsanawiyah* through a pre-experimental one-group pre-test–post-test design. The study examines the extent to which Busuu-assisted learning improves eighth-grade students' English tense mastery as measured by pre-test and post-test scores, and it explores a practical pedagogical integration of Busuu into regular grammar instruction to support tense practice within a realistic school timetable. The novelty of this study lies in providing classroom-based evidence from an Islamic junior high school setting in Indonesia using a structured, replicable intervention schedule and reporting both statistical significance and practical effect size as evidence of learning improvement.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Design**

This study employed a pre-experimental one-group pre-test–post-test design to examine the extent to which Busuu-assisted learning is associated with changes in students' English tense mastery in an Indonesian madrasah tsanawiyah context. It is a quantitative study because it measures learning improvement using numerical test scores and analyzes the pre–post difference statistically.

### **2.2 Participants and Setting**

The participants were 22 eighth-grade students at MTs DDI Tuppu Pinrang, Indonesia, taken from an intact class. Postver, complete matched pre-test and post-test scores were available for 22 students; therefore, the pre–post analysis was conducted using these 22 matched pairs. The study was conducted in the regular English learning setting.

### **2.3 Instrument**

Students' tense mastery was measured using a 30-item multiple-choice grammar test covering three tenses: simple present (items 1-10), simple past (items 11-20), and simple future (items 21-30). Each item provided four options (A-D). The test was administered as a pre-test and post-test using the same scoring procedure, where correct answers were scored 1 and incorrect answers 0, resulting in a maximum score of 30.

### **2.4 Procedure**

The research was implemented in three stages. First, students completed a grammar pre-test. Second, the intervention was conducted in six meetings (six treatments), held once a week, with each meeting lasting two class periods. During the intervention, Busuu was integrated into grammar learning activities to provide structured practice and feedback on tense use. Third, students completed a grammar post-test at the end of the intervention.

### **2.5 Data Analysis**

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum). Pre-test and post-test scores were compared using a paired-samples statistical test. Because the gain scores were not normally distributed, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was applied to examine the pre–post difference. Effect size ( $r$ ) was calculated to estimate the magnitude of improvement.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Result

This section presents the quantitative findings of the study. It first reports students' pre-test and post-test results to demonstrate the extent of improvement in tense mastery after the Busuu-assisted intervention. The discussion then interprets the results in relation to previous MALL and grammar research and outlines a feasible model for integrating Busuu into regular grammar instruction within a realistic school timetable.

##### 3.1.1 Pre-test and Post-test Results

Based on 22 matched pairs, the pre-test results indicated moderate tense mastery ( $M = 20.18$ ,  $SD = 5.08$ ,  $\text{min-max} = 6-25$ ). After six weekly Busuu assisted treatments (two class periods per meeting), students' post-test scores increased markedly ( $M = 28.23$ ,  $SD = 1.74$ ,  $\text{min-max} = 23-30$ ). The mean improvement was 8.05 points out of 30 ( $\approx 26.82$  points on a 0-100 scale), and score variability decreased substantially from pre-test to post-test, indicating more consistent mastery across students.

Because the gain scores were not normally distributed, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test was applied. The results showed a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores ( $W = 0.00$ ,  $p < .001$ ) with a very large effect size ( $r \approx 0.88$ ). These results indicate that Busuu assisted grammar learning was associated with strong improvement in students' tense mastery. Table 1 presents the individual pre-test and post-test scores for the 22 students (matched pairs) along with the percentage scores and gain values.

**Table 1. Pre-test and Post- test Result Sheet by Student Initial**

| Student Initial | Pre-test | Pre (%) | Post-test | Post (%) | Gain |
|-----------------|----------|---------|-----------|----------|------|
| HJ              | 19       | 63.33   | 28        | 93.33    | 9    |
| CY              | 19       | 63.33   | 29        | 96.67    | 10   |
| FKRM            | 24       | 80.00   | 23        | 76.67    | -1   |
| NN              | 18       | 60.00   | 29        | 96.67    | 11   |
| SWY             | 19       | 63.33   | 29        | 96.67    | 10   |
| SK              | 6        | 20.00   | 28        | 93.33    | 22   |
| NA-1            | 24       | 80.00   | 29        | 96.67    | 5    |
| NQ              | 24       | 80.00   | 26        | 86.67    | 2    |
| NAZ             | 7        | 23.33   | 29        | 96.67    | 22   |
| SM              | 19       | 63.33   | 27        | 90.00    | 8    |
| MZ              | 20       | 66.67   | 28        | 93.33    | 8    |
| NAK             | 22       | 73.33   | 30        | 100.00   | 8    |
| NG              | 25       | 83.33   | 28        | 93.33    | 3    |
| DA              | 25       | 83.33   | 29        | 96.67    | 4    |
| NA-2            | 22       | 73.33   | 30        | 100.00   | 8    |
| NRS             | 22       | 73.33   | 29        | 96.67    | 7    |
| MSW             | 24       | 80.00   | 30        | 100.00   | 6    |
| ABDR            | 24       | 80.00   | 27        | 90.00    | 3    |
| AS              | 21       | 70.00   | 29        | 96.67    | 8    |
| MAR             | 24       | 80.00   | 30        | 100.00   | 6    |

|     |    |       |    |       |    |
|-----|----|-------|----|-------|----|
| MIH | 17 | 56.67 | 25 | 83.33 | 8  |
| AF  | 19 | 63.33 | 29 | 96.67 | 10 |

Source: Pre-test and post-test data

Overall, almost all students demonstrated substantial gains in tense mastery, with the highest improvements observed among lower performing students in the pre-test. Only one student (FKRM) showed a slight decrease (-1), while the majority reached high post-test performance levels, indicating more consistent mastery across the class after the Busuu assisted intervention.

**Table 2. Summary of Pre-test and Post-test Results**

| Test      | N  | Min | Max | Mean  | SD   | Mean (%) |
|-----------|----|-----|-----|-------|------|----------|
| Pre-test  | 22 | 6   | 25  | 20.18 | 5.08 | 67.27    |
| Post-test | 22 | 23  | 30  | 28.23 | 1.74 | 94.09    |

Source: Pre-test and post-test data

Table 2 summarizes students' grammar test performance before and after the Busuu assisted intervention. The pre-test mean score was 20.18 out of 30 (67.27%) with a relatively large standard deviation (SD = 5.08), indicating varied initial mastery levels among students. After six weekly treatments, the post-test mean increased to 28.23 (94.09%) and the standard deviation decreased sharply (SD = 1.74). This pattern suggests not only an overall improvement in tense mastery but also more consistent achievement across students, as scores clustered closer to the high-performance range (min-max: 23-30) compared to the pre-test (min- max: 6-25).

### 3.2. Discussion

The findings support previous studies indicating that mobile-assisted learning can facilitate grammar development through repeated exposure, self-paced practice, and immediate corrective feedback (Ghorbani & Ebadi, 2020; Wang et al., 2021). Busuu provides structured exercises and automated feedback that may help learners notice errors and consolidate correct tense forms through repeated practice. The strong improvement and reduced score variability suggest that guided, feedback-rich mobile practice may particularly benefit students who initially struggle with tense accuracy.

Prior classroom-based evidence from Indonesian EFL contexts also indicates that multimedia-assisted interventions can produce significant learning gains through structured exposure and practice, supporting the plausibility of feedback-rich digital routines in regular timetables (Mukarrama, Kalsum, & Fajriansyah, 2025). In faith-based classrooms, sustained engagement with mobile practice may also be strengthened when learning activities are framed as value-consistent and psychologically supportive, as suggested by evidence on Islamic value-concordant English learning within Self-Determination Theory (Fakhrudin, Kalsum, & Jamal, 2025).

Importantly, the intervention in this study followed a realistic classroom schedule: six weekly treatments conducted during regular instructional time. This classroom-based implementation is pedagogically meaningful because it demonstrates not only that learning gains can occur, but also that Busuu can be implemented without demanding intensive daily sessions. Therefore, the following section specifies a feasible integration model that answers the second research question regarding how Busuu-assisted learning can be incorporated into regular grammar teaching within a realistic timetable.

#### 3.2.1. Pedagogical Integration of Busuu within a Realistic Timetable

Research on web-based digital modules in Indonesian junior high contexts highlights that structured integration models and accessible multimedia features can support independent practice and measurable learning improvement (Syahrianita & Kalsum, 2025). Building on the six-week implementation in this study (one meeting per week, two class periods per meeting), Busuu-assisted learning can be integrated into regular grammar instruction through a structured sequence consisting of five steps:

- a. warm-up and context setting to elicit the target tense (5-10 minutes)
- b. Focused explanation highlighting form meaning and common errors (10-15 minutes).
- c. guided Busuu practice in class with teacher monitoring and support (30-40 minutes).
- d. short whole class review addressing frequent errors observed during practice (10 minutes)
- e. Brief follow-up reinforcement through a short Busuu task or a simple production task such as writing several tense-based sentences

This structure maintains teacher control over learning objectives while leveraging Busuu's feedback and repetition features for practice efficiency. To support classroom management, teachers may set clear time limits, assign specific Busuu units aligned with the lesson objective, and use simple progress monitoring (e.g., a checklist) to keep students on task. With this approach, Busuu functions as a pedagogical tool that complements instruction rather than replacing it, and it remains feasible within a realistic school timetable.

### 3.3. Pedagogical Implications

The findings imply that Busuu can serve as a practical practice and feedback tool to complement tense instruction in Indonesian *madrasah tsanawiyah*. When used with clear lesson objectives and teacher monitoring, Busuu may increase opportunities for feedback rich practice within limited classroom time and support more consistent achievement across learners. The sharp reduction in score variability from pre-test to post-test further suggests that structured mobile practice can help lower achieving students catch up through repeated exposure and immediate correction. Therefore, integrating Busuu through a guided routine brief instruction, targeted in-app practice, error focused review, and short follow-up tasks offers a feasible pedagogical strategy for revitalizing grammar teaching without requiring intensive daily sessions.

### 3.4. Limitations

This research employed a one-group pre-test–post-test design without a control group; therefore, causal conclusions should be interpreted cautiously. The analysis was based on 22 matched pairs although 23 students participated due to incomplete paired scores. Future studies should employ quasi-experimental designs with comparison groups, longer interventions, and retention measures to strengthen causal inference and to examine broader grammar components.

## 4. Conclusion

This research concludes that Busuu assisted learning is a feasible and effective support for developing students' English tense mastery in an Indonesian *madrasah tsanawiyah* when implemented through guided classroom integration. The findings indicate that structured, feedback-rich mobile practice can strengthen tense accuracy and promote more consistent performance across learners within limited instructional time.

In terms of application, teachers may integrate Busuu into regular grammar lessons through a practical routine consisting of brief tense review, targeted in app practice with teacher monitoring, short error focused review, and follow-up reinforcement tasks. This approach enables grammar pedagogy to shift from rule-heavy explanation toward practice-based learning while remaining compatible with a realistic school timetable.

Future research should employ comparison groups and examine retention to strengthen causal claims. Researchers are also encouraged to explore the value-oriented dimension of mobile assisted learning in madrasah contexts by operationalizing *amanah*, *istiqāmah*, and *ta'āwun* as measurable learning behaviors and assessing them through integrated instruments such as validated questionnaires, learning logs, and teacher observation checklists.

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