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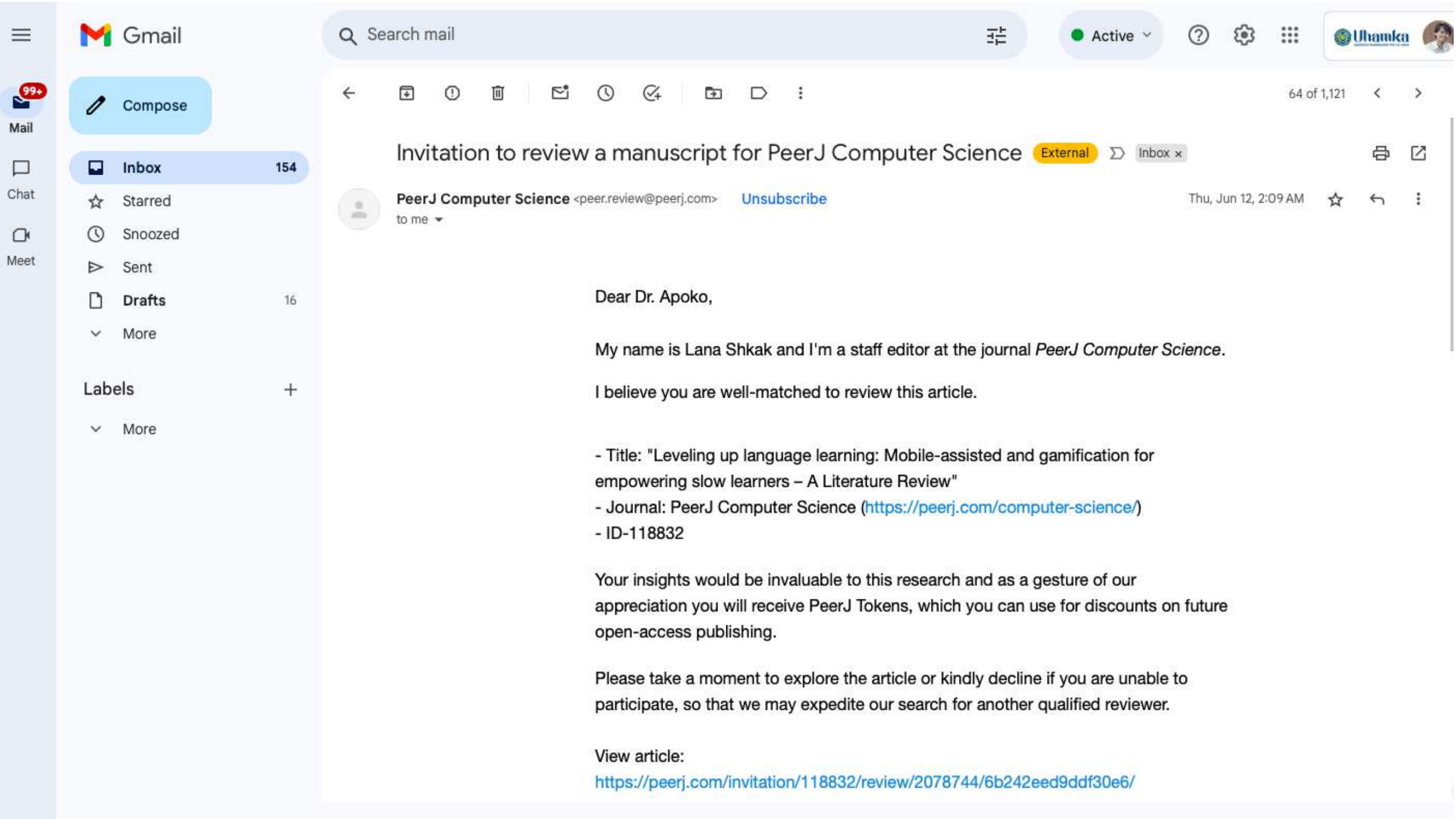
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Thu, Jun 12, 2:09 AM ☆ ↶ ⋮

Dear Dr. Apoko,

My name is Lana Shkak and I'm a staff editor at the journal *PeerJ Computer Science*.

I believe you are well-matched to review this article.

- Title: "Leveling up language learning: Mobile-assisted and gamification for empowering slow learners – A Literature Review"
- Journal: PeerJ Computer Science (<https://peerj.com/computer-science/>)
- ID-118832

Your insights would be invaluable to this research and as a gesture of our appreciation you will receive PeerJ Tokens, which you can use for discounts on future open-access publishing.

Please take a moment to explore the article or kindly decline if you are unable to participate, so that we may expedite our search for another qualified reviewer.

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Your review of "Leveling up language learning: Mobile-assisted and gamification for empowering slow learners – A Literature Review"

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Wed, Jun 25, 7:01 AM



Dear Dr. Apoko,

Thank you for agreeing to review **Leveling up language learning: Mobile-assisted and gamification for empowering slow learners – A Literature Review**.

Your review is due on 28th June (in 3 days).

We truly appreciate your input for this article. Don't forget our on-time review reward!

You have been awarded 10 PeerJ Tokens for your review(s) of this article. Each Token is worth 10 USD and can be exchanged for discounts on your next APC. Tokens can be stacked and pooled with your co-authors to maximize your discount. The more you review, the more tokens you can accumulate, the less you pay to publish.

Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to seeing your review.

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Peer Review acceptance confirmation for "Leveling up language learning: Mobile-assisted and gamification for empowering slow learners – A Literature Review" (#CS-2025:05:118832:0:1:REVIEW)

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Fri, Jun 13, 9:18 PM

Dear Dr. Apoko,

This is to confirm that you have agreed to review the article - **Leveling up language learning: Mobile-assisted and gamification for empowering slow learners – A Literature Review** - for the journal PeerJ Computer Science, to be submitted within **15 days (on or before 28th June)**.

On behalf of the authors, and the journal, we would like to express our gratitude, and hope your reviewing experience is an enjoyable and rewarding one.

Literature Review guidance

This is a literature review article. Please note:

Read the [unique review criteria](#) for literature reviews.

Please write your review with the unique criteria in mind.

PeerJ Computer Science

 Reviewing Manuscript 118832v1

Leveling up language learning: Mobile-assisted and gamification for empowering slow learners – A Literature Review

This review has been submitted to the editor.

Review

Reviewer 2

Tri Wintolo Apoko

MINOR REVISIONS

triwin_apoko@uhamka.ac.id

 **This review will be anonymous.**

Reviewed 18 minutes ago

Basic reporting

Overall, this manuscript has been good. However, there are few mistakes in spelling in some tables shared. In one or two cases, it is also found mistakes in grammar use. You need to be more careful.

Experimental design

The study design you proposed was appropriately conducted. Regarding the survey method, you already elaborated with details and cited some sources. However, it could be strengthened with how you analysed the collected data.

Validity of the findings

The results you assessed have been comprehensively presented with provided research questions. However, the conclusions you stated should link to the five research questions.

Additional comments

After I read the manuscript comprehensively, the topic is quite interesting and indicates a novelty in the type of learners in the use of mobile assisted learning and gamification in English language learning (slow learners). Moreover, this contributes to some implications. However, you may need to improve this better technically.

1. You should include the research questions in the introduction sections, not in the methodology
2. You may need to elaborate the discussion section based on the results with some prior relevant studies.
3. Make sure that you consistent with the type of references used for APA 6 or 7. In addition, some titles are all capitalized. Overall, the references are already provided with DOIs and updated.



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Dear Dr. Apoko,

Thank you for submitting your review for the article - **Leveling up language learning: Mobile-assisted and gamification for empowering slow learners – A Literature Review.**

You will receive a copy of the editorial decision in due course.

As promised, the details of your submission discount for reviewing are shown below.

You have been awarded 10 PeerJ Tokens for your review(s) of this article. Each Token is worth 10 USD and can be exchanged for discounts on your next APC. Tokens can be stacked and pooled with your co-authors to maximize your discount. The more you review, the more tokens you can accumulate, the less you pay to publish.

For your reference, your review is appended below. Thank you again for the time you spent on it.



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Revised manuscript received - please can you re-review it ("Leveling up language learning")



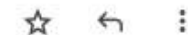
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Aug 9, 2025, 2:35 AM (9 days ago)



Dear Dr. Apoko,

As you will recall, you previously reviewed the manuscript noted below for *PeerJ Computer Science*.

The authors have now revised the manuscript and I would be obliged if you could comment on the revision.

- Title: "Leveling up language learning: Mobile-assisted and gamification for empowering slow learners – A Literature Review"
- Journal: PeerJ Computer Science (<https://peerj.com/computer-science/>)
- ID-118832

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Leveling Up Language Learning: Mobile-Assisted and Gamification for Empowering Slow Learners – A Literature Review

Zeeshan Ahmad¹, Kashif Ishaq¹, Atif Alvi¹, Nurhizam Safie², Naeem A. Nawaz¹, Abdul Basit Dogar¹

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ABSTRACT:

The acquisition of a new language presents formidable challenges, particularly for slow learners grappling with deficits in retention, comprehension, and motivation. The global prioritization of English as a lingua franca underscores the urgency of innovative pedagogical approaches to facilitate linguistic proficiency. This systematic review synthesizes findings from 69 studies on Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL), focusing on the efficacy of mobile and gamified applications in fostering English language acquisition among slow learners. Leveraging the ubiquity of smartphones and advancements in gamification, these applications employ diverse theoretical frameworks, adaptive content, and interactive tools to create tailored learning environments that address the cognitive and motivational barriers faced by slow learners. This review delineated educational levels and contextual factors influencing MALL implementation, highlighting the role of personalized pacing, iterative reinforcement, and real-time feedback in enhancing learner outcomes. A novel taxonomy is proposed to categorize MALL methodologies and technologies, offering a structured framework for future research. This analysis elucidates the transformative potential of adaptive visuals and motivational gamification in promoting engagement and proficiency, while identifying persistent challenges, such as the need for inclusive design and robust evaluation metrics. By advocating for context-specific, technology-enhanced interventions, this study underscores MALL's capacity to redefine language education, fostering equitable and efficacious learning pathways for slow learners in a globalized linguistic landscape.

Keywords: Digital learning; Education Technology; Gamification; Language learning; M-learning; Mobile-based; Slow learner.

INTRODUCTION:

Mobile devices in education enhance the teaching and learning processes but require training, resource selection, and student profile considerations (Barbosa et al., 2016). Mobile learning is a valuable educational strategy for inclusive education and sustainable development, promoting learning for students with diverse needs and enhancing teaching tasks (Palomino, 2022). M-learning positively impacts pre-service teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes, but requires specific equipment and facilitates efficiency. Mobile learning (m-learning) has become an essential tool in

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August 05, 2025

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Deleted: Learning a new language can be inherently challenging, particularly for slow learners who struggle with retention, comprehension, and engagement. Many nations promote the acquisition of international languages, with English being the most widely taught because of its global significance. The widespread use of smartphones, along with advancements in mobile applications and gamification, has created new opportunities for language learning, providing accessible and engaging resources that meet various learners' needs. This study systematically reviews 58 related research works on mobile-assisted and gamification-based applications to empower slow learners for language learning. These applications use different theories, frameworks, and sophisticated tools to design interactive learning environments. Slow learners can benefit from these tools with tailored pace, repetition, and immediate feedback, which are difficult with conventional learning methods. This study also examines levels of education and language learning contexts for each mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) application and the different measurement tools used. This emphasizes how adaptive content, visual support, and motivational gamification can engage slow learners and achieve better results. This research also suggests a taxonomy for MALL studies, which provides categories of important approaches and technologies. This section discusses challenges, especially designing more inclusive and adaptive gamified applications for slow learners.¶

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208 methodical strategy guarantees a thorough, open, and independent research process.

209 **METHODOLOGY:**

210 This survey implemented the guidelines for reviews as outlined in the field of engineering analysis by Wohlin et al.
211 (2020). Following the finalization of research queries, a structured search methodology was developed to minimize
212 potential biases in the studies. This process involved three phases, illustrated in Figure 1 and elaborated on in the
213 subsequent sections.

214 **Review of the plan:**

215 A well-defined search strategy was developed to identify all relevant strategies. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the analysis
216 method and outline the search procedure for selecting articles, as well as the classification system and mapping. This
217 research adopts a systematic and structured approach:

218 **Conduct Review:**

219 The review process consisted of four steps. In the first step, an examination was made from Google Scholar with
220 aggregates publications, PubMed Central (PMC) with a focus on health, education, and psychological studies indices,
221 DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), Web of Science (WoS),
222 Scopus, and Semantic Scholar with publication across relevant disciplines for relevant primary studies. The majority
223 of the examination was made from the Web of Science. In the second step, the collection of studies was filtered with
224 inclusion and exclusion criteria, and then in the third step, quality assessment standards were checked for consistency.
225 The final step of backward snowballing was carried out to gather suitable and related articles.

226 **Automated Research in Web of Science:**

227 To find relevant information, we carried out a comprehensive investigation. The Web of Science core collection, a
228 meticulously arranged database of more than 21,120 peer-reviewed scholarly journals, served as our primary source
229 of information. These internationally renowned journals cover more than 300 academic fields and offer open-access
230 and traditional subscription-based options (Clarivate, 2024). WoS is a platform that enables users to rapidly collect,
231 comprehend, share, and filter data from multiple databases based on chosen keywords. WoS was the leading search
232 engine used by the researcher to conduct a literature review (LR) effectively. In addition, search resources include
233 Scopus. They created targeted search queries by combining pertinent keywords with Boolean logic operators (AND,
234 OR). In order to find relevant research papers, these operators supported crafting exact search strings. The results of
235 this search strategy are shown in Figure 3, which presents an extensive overview of results retrieved from the Web of
236 Science databases. This also holds for other databases, such as Scopus. The final search string, which contained both
237 "AND" and "OR" Boolean operators along with particular keywords used to search the WoS core collection, is shown
238 in Table 3. Only article titles were considered in the search, and extra filters were applied for particular periods to
239 reduce the number of results relevant to the research.

240 **Phase 1: Search for Relevant Research papers for the study**

241 We conducted our analysis using a literature review in which research articles were taken from various sources,
242 including JSTOR, Scopus, Google Scholar, Springer Link, Web of Science, and ScienceDirect. Using pertinent
243 keywords, 54,400 journals were chosen. Table 3 summarizes the keywords used in the search process and provides a
244 filter for the time period in various digital repositories.

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The objective and motivation of this research are reshaped
into research questions and defined in Table 2.¶

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326 ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS WITH DISCUSSION

327 In this section, finalized [sixty-nine](#) research papers will be analyzed based on the research questions.

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328 **RQ 1: What are the prominent publication channels for research in MALL, particularly those focusing on**
329 **integrating gamification and addressing the needs of slow learners? Additionally, which geographical regions**
330 **have consistently contributed to MALL research over the years, along with quality assessments and publication**
331 **sources?**

332 Game-based learning increases learners' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and fosters a sense of accomplishment by
333 encouraging a desire for competition, achievement, and social interaction. Several scholars have examined how game
334 design elements can be applied in **educational** content to increase learner satisfaction and participation; however,
335 students' minds are not on the same level in the classroom. Some learn very quickly, while others take their time; these
336 students are referred to as slow learners. This analysis focused on the instructional design and delivery of educational
337 material made easy, especially for slow learners, highlighting the need for educators to rethink their teaching methods
338 and incorporate game-like mechanics to accommodate a variety of learning styles. Finding the publication sites for
339 analysis based on meta-information in the MALL and GBL for the slow learners' domain was necessary. Selected
340 studies from various publication channels, including grade levels, types, years, and geographic distribution, were
341 included in this section to analyze the MALL and GBL research. Research papers from Google Scholar and Springer
342 Link are displayed in Table 5 of the literature review, while Figure 4 displays the selection of pertinent articles for
343 using the review procedure.

344 This part looked at who published MALL research for slow learners and what research was conducted from
345 multiple angles. When it was done, where it was done, and which education level it focused on. This gave a complete
346 picture of how MALL research with a gamification approach for slow learners has to be developed. The finalized
347 studies from different repositories were presented yearly, as shown in Table 5 and Figure 5. A maximum of
348 publications was selected from the year [2024 20](#) out of [69](#), indicating that more interest is developing in MALL
349 integration with a gamification approach in both teaching and learning. However, less interest in MALL integration
350 with gamification was observed from 2015 to [2020](#) and from 2020 to [2025](#), resulting in [more](#) improvement for slow
351 learners in teaching and learning.

352 Table 6 presents the country/continent-wise distribution of the studies. Most publications, [54](#) out of [69](#), were from
353 Asia, and the fewest were from North America [and Europe/Africa](#). According to a defined condition in "Research
354 Methodology," each finalized study was assigned a Quality Assurance (QA) score, as displayed in Table 7; the score
355 ranged from 1 to 4, indicating the quality of the evaluated studies. Scores below 4 were discarded. MALL researchers
356 may find this QA system helpful when selecting studies on their topics, as it highlights usage and challenges. Most
357 articles were published in the Q1 category and received the highest scores, while studies from less well-known
358 journals, though still relevant, typically scored a four. In Tables 8 and 9, the researcher arranged all of the chosen
359 studies, showcasing their classification and quality assurance ratings. They classified each study based on three
360 primary factors: the type of research, the methods employed, and the research approach (empirical type). Each study
361 was assigned to one of four groups: review papers, research that evaluates something, assessment frameworks, or
362 solution proposals.

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1198	Acknowledgement:			
1199	The authors used ChatGPT and Grammarly to improve the language of the manuscript.			
1200				
1201	References:	Zeeshan	Formatted	↓
1202				
1203	Abbott, D., Chatzifoti, O., Ferguson, J., Louchart, S., & Stals, S. (2023). Serious “Slow” Game Jam - A Game Jam Model for			
1204	Serious Game Design. ACM International Conference Proceeding Series, 28–36. https://doi.org/10.1145/3610602.3610604	Zeeshan	Formatted	↓
1205	Abdalla, I. (2007). Evaluating effectiveness of e-blackboard system using TAM framework: A structural			
1206	analysis approach. In AACE Journal (Vol. 15, Issue 3).	Zeeshan	Moved down [1]: Piumi	→
1207	Abdullah, F., Ward, R., & Ahmed, E. (2016). Investigating the influence of the most commonly used external			
1208	variables of TAM on students’ Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU) of e-	Zeeshan	Deleted: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.05.014	
1209	portfolios. Computers in Human Behavior, 63, 75–90. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.05.014			
1210	Agualuza, I. R., Melo, S. M., GarcEs, L., & de Oliveira Neves, V. (2025). MPS Manager: A Serious Game to Enhance Teaching	Zeeshan	Moved (insertion) [2]	→
1211	on Software Development Process Quality. Informatics in Education, 24(2), 223–260.			
1212	https://doi.org/10.15388/infedu.2025.11	Zeeshan	Moved (insertion) [3]	→
1213	Agustiani, A., Masvithah Rery, N., & Zalifah Putri, H. (2025). Integrating Technology in Education: Disney+ Hotstar as a Tool			
1214	for Vocabulary Improvement. INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research, 5, 2282–2290.	Zeeshan	Moved (insertion) [4]	→
1215	Aisyah, B., Muhaimi, L., & Arafiq. (2024). Use of Gamification in Teaching Vocabulary of 11th Grade			
1216	Students at SMAN 4 Mataram. Journal of English Education Forum (JEEF), 4(2), 113–121.	Zeeshan	Formatted	↓
1217	https://doi.org/10.29303/jeef.v4i2.576			
1218	Aisyah, K., Mardiyah, M., Chariska, Z., Ismail, S., Setiabudi, A., & Septiana, H. (2023). The Vocabulary			
1219	Learning for Slow Learners (pp. 1880–1885). https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-008-4_204			
1220	Alharbi, S. H. (2021). The Struggling English Language Learners: Case Studies of English Language	Zeeshan	Deleted: Akbarzhanovna, T. O.	↓
1221	Learning Difficulties in EFL Context. English Language Teaching, 14(11), 108.			
1222	https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v14n11p108			
1223	Ali, Z., & Bhaskar, S. B. (2016). Basic statistical tools in research and data analysis. In Indian Journal of			
1224	Anaesthesia (Vol. 60, Issue 9, pp. 662–669). Indian Society of Anaesthetists.			
1225	https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5049.190623			
1226	Almomen, R. K., Kaufman, D., Alotaibi, H., Al-Rowais, N. A., Alheik, M., & Albattal, S. M. (2016). Applying the ADDIE—	Zeeshan	Deleted: AL-Qadri, A. H., Zhao, W.	↓
1227	Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation—Instructional Design Model to Continuing Professional			
1228	Development for Primary Care Physicians in Saudi Arabia. International Journal of Clinical Medicine, 07(08), 538–546.	Zeeshan	Moved down [5]: . (2021).	→
1229	https://doi.org/10.4236/ijcm.2016.78059			
1230	Alzaid, F. (2018). The effects of gamification based formative assessment on motivation and vocabulary	Zeeshan	Deleted: The prevalence of the	↓
1231	acquisition in ESL classroom.			
1232	Aschieri, F., Durosini, I., & Smith, J. D. (2020). Self-curiosity: Definition and measurement. Self and Identity,	Zeeshan	Deleted: McGill University	↓
1233	19(1), 105–115. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2018.1543728			
1234	Askarizad, R., & Safari, H. (2020). The influence of social interactions on the behavioral patterns of the people	Zeeshan	Deleted: Andini, D., Pratama, R.,	↓
1235	in urban spaces (case study: The pedestrian zone of Rasht Municipality Square, Iran). Cities, 101.			
1236	https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.102687	Zeeshan	Moved (insertion) [6]	→
1237	Azan Mat Zin, N., Jaafar, A., & Seng Yue, W. (2009). Digital Game-based-learning (DGBL) model and development methodology			
1238	for teaching history.	Zeeshan	Formatted	↓
1239	Barbosa, D. N. F., Bassani, P. B. S., Martins, R. L., Mossmann, J. B., & Barbosa, J. L. V. (2016). Using mobile			
1240	learning in formal and non-formal educational settings. Lecture Notes in Computer Science (Including	Zeeshan	Formatted	↓

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Review preview

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triwin_apoko@uhamka.ac.id

 This review will be anonymous.

Basic reporting

No comment

Experimental design

No comment

Validity of the findings

No comment

Additional comments

You have already revised the manuscript better, shifting the research questions (RQs), clearly providing study design for data analyses, and presenting the discussion section linked to the stated research questions as well as the conclusion structure you made (Actually you should not make it into some sections of the RQs for the conclusion; you may make it into one/two paragraphs covering the RQs). However, you may need to check and recheck some capitalized titles for the references (5 references) to revise, indicating they are not consistent enough with the APA style. Overall, you have done your best for the revision.

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Review

Reviewer 2

Tri Wintolo Apoko

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Reviewed a minute ago

Basic reporting

No comment

Experimental design

No comment

Validity of the findings

No comment

Additional comments

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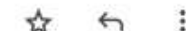
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We hope you enjoyed reviewing with us. If you feel like sharing your experience