

A Flow –Octalysis Gamification Framework for Tertiary and Tribal Learners: A Scientific Study

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Introduction

The learning of L2 plays a pivotal role in the academic and professional advancement of students. For tribal learners, particularly those from Tamil medium backgrounds, the challenges of fluency in English as an L2 are compounded by socio-economic and educational barriers. In contrast, tertiary learners from more privileged backgrounds often have better access to resources that enhance their L2 learning experience. This paper explores the effectiveness of gamified, task-based language interventions in enhancing L2 fluency, with a special focus on tribal learners. The research builds on the Octalysis Framework of gamification, which focuses on human motivation, and incorporates Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL) to engage learners in meaningful, goal-oriented activities that promote fluency through collaborative and curious peer learning atmosphere.

Research Background

Language Learning Challenges for Tertiary and Tribal Learners

Tertiary-level tribal learners often face specific challenges in acquiring English as a second language (L2), largely due to limited exposure, socio-economic difficulties, and a lack of culturally responsive teaching methods. Ellis (2003) stresses that “meaningful communication in language tasks is essential for developing fluency,” yet tribal learners often lack such opportunities, resulting in lower motivation, confidence, and participation compared to non-tribal students. According to Deterding

et al. (2011), “gamification can benefit marginalized groups by fostering more engaging and inclusive learning environments,” offering a potential solution to these issues. However, there remains a significant gap in research on how gamification can be specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of tribal learners. This study aims to bridge this gap by introducing the Language Relay Program, a gamified, team-task-based intervention, designed to boost engagement, motivation and L2 acquisition among tribal learners.

The Role of Gamification in ELT

Gamification has become a powerful educational tool, enhancing learning by incorporating game mechanics into classroom activities. Chou’s (2014) Octalysis Framework highlights “eight core drives of human motivation—including achievement, creativity, and social influence”—which can be effectively utilized to increase learner engagement and retention. When applied to English Language Teaching (ELT), these principles make learning more interactive and relevant, especially for underrepresented groups like tribal learners. Egbert (2003) notes that creating a learning environment with “clear goals and immediate feedback” can induce a state of flow, leading to higher levels of student involvement. The Language Relay Program integrates these gamification principles, ensuring that the tasks address the motivational needs of tribal and slow learners while enhancing their L2 speaking skills. By aligning game mechanics with learning objectives, the program fills an essential research gap by exploring how structured gamification can uplift learners often marginalized in traditional educational frameworks.

Objective: This study critically analyses the Language Relay Program using the Octalysis Framework and Flow Theory to assess the impact of gamified, task-based methods on English skill development (LSRW) among tertiary learners, comparing tribal and non-tribal groups. It explores how core drives like creativity, achievement, and social influence enhance language outcomes, motivation, and confidence. Additionally, the study identifies challenges faced by tribal learners in gamified tasks and suggests strategies to make L2 instruction more inclusive for diverse learning needs.

Hypothesis: The integration of the Octalysis Framework and Flow Theory in gamified, task-based language learning significantly enhances LSRW skills, motivation, and engagement, with varied impacts across tribal and non-tribal learners.

Situation Rationale Analysis (SRA)

Since COVID-19, tertiary and tribal learners have become more prone to digital distractions, with extensive mobile use affecting their focus on essential English-speaking skills and overall learning performance. Traditional lecture-based methods often fail to capture their attention, while gamified, interactive environments—proven to reduce distractions and promote authentic communication (Deterding et al., 2011; Ellis, 2003)—are not widely accessible to these students. Tribal learners also face unique challenges, such as low confidence and limited exposure to English, which conventional, repetitive teaching approaches are ill-equipped to address.

Literature Review

The Octalysis Framework, developed by Yu-Kai Chou, identifies eight core motivational drives that can significantly enhance engagement and retention in language learning, especially among marginalized groups like tribal and tertiary slow learners (Chou, 2014). Additionally, Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL), as highlighted by Ellis (2003), encourages learners to engage with language through real-life tasks, promoting fluency and boosting confidence through meaningful communication. Research indicates that TBLL fosters more authentic language use among learners. Gamification further contributes to this dynamic, as studies by Deterding et al. (2011) reveal that incorporating game mechanics creates a motivating and interactive learning environment, particularly beneficial for underrepresented groups such as tribal learners. Complementing these approaches, Flow Theory emphasizes the importance of clear goals, immediate feedback, and balanced challenges in fostering a flow state that enhances engagement and learning outcomes (Egbert, 2003). Abbott (2000) links Flow Theory to motivation, noting that enjoyable and appropriately challenging tasks

can significantly increase learners' motivation and engagement in language learning.

Methodology

Participants

A total of 194 L2 learners participated in the Language Relay Program. These learners were divided into four distinct groups based on their educational background:

- 20% Tamil Medium Tribal learners
- 5% English Medium Tribal learners
- 70% other tertiary Tamil Medium learners from government schooling background
- 5% other Tertiary English Medium learners

The diversity in educational backgrounds allowed for an analysis of the varying impacts of the gamified intervention across different learner types, particularly focusing on their communication and speaking skill development in L2.

Research Design

The research employed a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the effectiveness of the Language Relay Program. The intervention spanned **30 hours** and consisted of task-based gamified activities aimed at enhancing speaking skills. To collect quantitative data, a Google Form survey was administered post-intervention, while qualitative observations and feedback were recorded throughout the sessions to assess participant engagement, motivation, and performance.

Frameworks and Theoretical Approaches

Octalysis Gamification Framework

The Language Relay Program was designed using key elements from **Yu-Kai Chou's Octalysis Gamification Framework** to stimulate

learner engagement and motivation. The core drives incorporated into the gamified tasks included:

- **Drive 6: Scarcity & Impatience** – Tasks were time-bound to create a sense of urgency and push learners toward faster decision-making and language use.
- **Drive 7: Unpredictability & Curiosity** – The games were designed to be unpredictable, maintaining learner curiosity and attention throughout the tasks.
- **Drive 8: Loss & Avoidance** – Learners were motivated to avoid losing progress or rewards, which helped sustain their commitment to task completion.
- **Drive 3: Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback** – The tasks offered opportunities for creative expression and immediate feedback, which fostered learner autonomy and boosted confidence in language use.
- **Drive 4: Ownership & Possession** – Participants could track their progress through points and rewards, giving them a sense of ownership over their achievements.

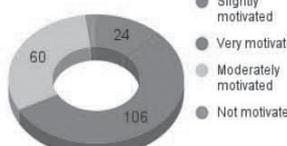
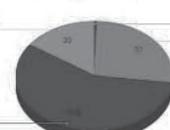
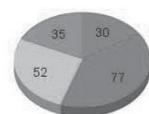
Flow Theory

MihalyCsikszentmihalyi’s Flow Theory was applied to ensure that each activity balanced the challenge with the learners’ skill levels. Tasks were designed to avoid being too simple, which could lead to boredom, or too difficult, which might cause anxiety. This balance aimed to keep learners in an optimal state of engagement or “flow,” wherein they could perform their best while enjoying the learning process.

Data Collection and Discussion

To integrate MihalyCsikszentmihalyi’s Flow Theory with Yu-Kai Chou’s Octalysis Framework, the research scholar with his unique contribution through the Language Relay Program has deeply depicted through a combined chart highlighting the “flow state” and the motivational drivers that support learners’ engagement and language acquisition. A Google form questionnaire was circulated to all the tertiary level and tribal

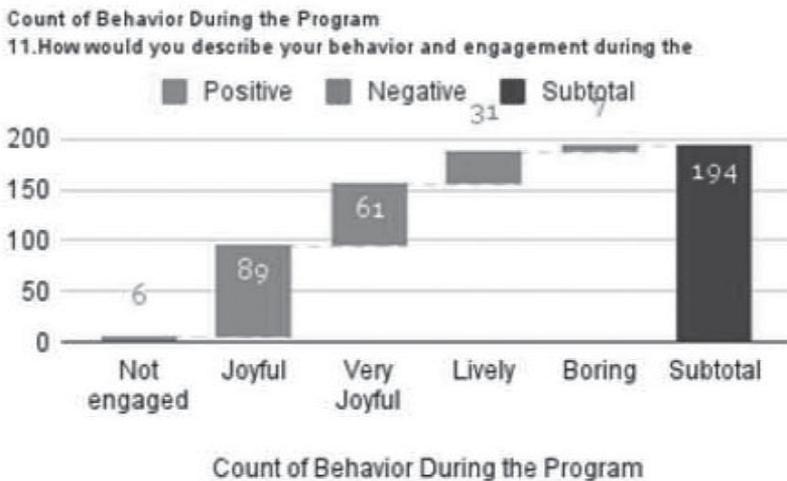
learners who participated. The questionnaire and the results are clearly indicated how they were motivated

S.No.	Questionnaire	Result
1.	Did the Language Relay Program motivate you to improve your English skill?	<p>Count of Motivation</p>  <p>● Yes ● Somewhat ● No</p>
2.	How would you rate your overall motivation?	 <p>● Slightly motivated ● Very motivated ● Moderately motivated ● Not motivated</p>
3.	Which type of learning environment do you prefer to enhance your speaking skill?	<p>Count of Preferred Learning Environment</p>  <p>Individual 10% Preferred Learning 52% Classroom 28% Outside Group 10%</p>
4.	How many new English words or phrases did you learn during the program?	<p>Count of Vocabulary Acquisition</p>  <p>● 11-15 ● 16+ ● 6-10 ● 1-5</p>
5.	Were you able to participate actively and freely in the Language Relay Program?	<p>Count of Participation</p>  <p>● No ● Yes ● Sometimes</p>
6.	How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the Language Relay Program in improving your English skill?	<p>Rate of Program Effectiveness</p>  <p>● 4 ● Effective ● Very effective ● Neutral ● Ineffective ● Very ineffective</p>

The survey results demonstrate the effectiveness of the Language Relay Program in improving English language skills and fostering a positive learning experience.

Motivation and Learning Environment: 100% of participants indicated that the program motivated them to improve their English, with 58.4% feeling “very motivated.” The majority (65.9%) preferred interactive learning environments like group discussions and games.

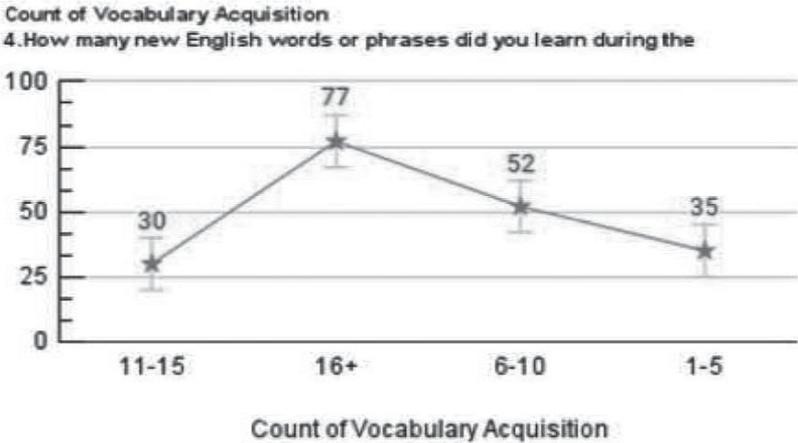
Skill Development and Confidence: The program significantly impacted speaking skills, with 55% of participants reporting the most improvement in this area. Furthermore, 43.3% felt “very confident”



speaking in front of others, suggesting the program successfully boosted public speaking confidence.

Program Impact and Engagement: A large majority (88.4%) rated the program as either “very effective” or “effective” in improving their English. Participants actively engaged with the program, as evidenced by 93.3% reporting they could “actively and freely participate” and 78.4% describing their behavior as “very joyful” or “joyful.”

Teamwork and Gamification: The program fostered positive team dynamics, with 85% of participants rating their teammates’ cooperation



as “excellent” or “good.” The gamified environment elicited positive emotions, with 48.3% feeling “confident” and 35% feeling “excited.”

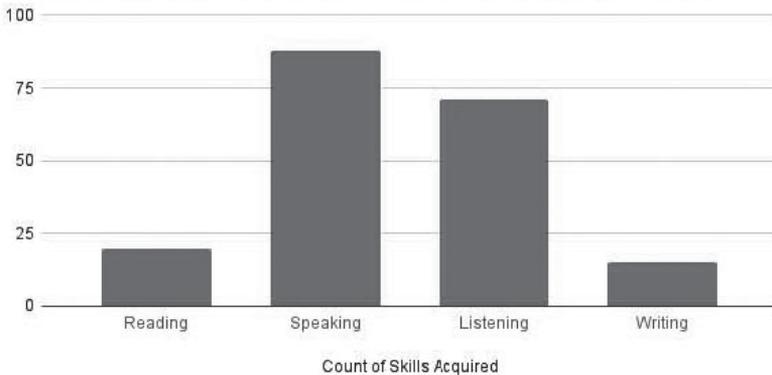
Vocabulary Acquisition: The program also facilitated vocabulary growth, with 48.3% of participants learning 16 or more new words and phrases.

Game Preferences: Among the games, “Passing on the story” was the most popular (45%), followed by “Look at the image and write” (36.7%). Overall, the survey numbers highlight the success of the Language Relay Program in motivating participants, improving their English skills, and creating an engaging and enjoyable learning experience.

The Language Relay Program effectively fills a significant gap in traditional learning methods by harmoniously blending Flow Theory with the Octalysis Framework. By focusing on gamified, team-oriented tasks, the program promotes deep language engagement while maintaining a flow state to enhance the overall learner experience. The Octalysis Framework ensures that a variety of motivational drivers are engaged, allowing the program to be tailored to the unique needs of each learner. This combination of frameworks not only increases adaptability but also provides a more dynamic and individualized approach to successful language Learning in LSRW Skills.

Count of Skills Acquired

8. Which skill did you improve the most during the program?



The chart clearly explains how both tertiary level and tribal learners have quickly improved their LSRW skill through the language program especially in speaking skill and the listening skill.

To conclude, the gamified, task-based Language Relay Program demonstrated its effectiveness in improving English-speaking fluency and boosting motivation among tertiary-level tribal learners, helping them to address challenges related to shyness and self-confidence in L2 communication. By incorporating the Octalysis Framework and Flow Theory, the program fostered an engaging, motivating environment that helped to bridge language fear-complex and psychological barriers divides between tribal and non-tribal learners, providing equal opportunities for language development. The noted improvements in LSRW skills, particularly speaking fluency, reveal the promise of gamification and collaborative learning in helping tribal learners to overcome longstanding barriers to language fluency. This study ultimately highlights gamified interventions as powerful educational tools that enable underrepresented learners to develop crucial L2 skills essential for both academic and professional success.

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