RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS OF SCHOOL LEARNERS USING GARDNER'S INTRA-PERSONAL AND INTER-PERSONAL INTELLIGENCES

N. PRATHYUSHA

Research Scholar, Department of English, Osmania University

ABSTRACT

The theory of Multiple Intelligence (MI) suggests that students have different strengths, learning styles and even learning potential, contrary to the traditional framework of learning where only students with strong linguistic, mathematical and spacial abilities are recognized and accepted, in the society. If teachers are aware of different intelligences possessed by their students, they can design different exercises to enhance the language skills of the students. This article focuses on ways of enhancing the English language skills among the students, using Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory. For the purpose of the study, Gardner's MI questionnaire was administered to 100 school students. A pre-test, intervention programme, and a post-test were conducted to make the study more authentic.

Key words: Multiple Intelligence, questionnaire, pre-test, intervention programme, post-test

Introduction

The theory of Multiple Intelligence was first proposed by psychologist Howard Gardner in 1983 in his book "Frames of Mind". Gardner(1993) defines 'intelligence' as the ability to 'solve problems or fashion products that are of consequence in a particular cultural setting or community'.

He further added that

> The problem-solving skill allows one to approach a situation in which a goal is to be obtained and to locate the appropriate route to that goal. The creation of a cultural product is crucial to such functions as capturing and transmitting knowledge or expressing one's views or feelings. The problems to be solved range from creating an end for a story to anticipating a mating move in chess to repairing a quilt. Products range from scientific theories to musical compositions to successful political campaigns. (p.15)

Gardner identified seven different kinds of intelligence. Few more intelligences were included in the later part of the work. He argued that individuals differ only in the level of their skills and how these intelligences combine.

1. Linguistic: the ability to use language in special and creative ways, which is something lawyers, writers, editors, and interpreters are strong in.

2. Logical/mathematical: the ability to think rationally, often found with doctors, engineers, programmers, and scientists.

3. Spatial: the ability to form mental models of the world, something architects, decorators, sculptors, and painters are good at.

4. Musical: a good ear for music, as is strong in singers and composers.

5. Bodily/kinesthetic: having a well-coordinated body, something usually found in athletes and craftsperson.

6. Interpersonal: the ability to be able to work well with people, understand them, which is strong in salespeople, politicians, and teachers

7. Intrapersonal: the ability to understand oneself and apply one's talent successfully, which leads to happy and well-adjusted people in all areas of life.

English language skills

Some people have a great ability to develop rapport with others easily and quickly, making them feel at ease. These people can read other persons reactions and can empathies with them. Language skills are the live skills we use every day to communicate and interact with other people, both individually and in groups. Interpersonal skills are not just important in the work place, our personnel and social lives are also benefited from them. People with good interpersonal skills are usually perceived as optimistic, calm, confident and charismatic-qualities that are often endearing or appealing to others.

The ability to communicate effectively is vital human intelligence. Each of us are already equipped with the interpersonal skills to an extent, but how confidently we interact makes us a better individual.

Research Design

The present research focuses on enhancing the English language skills of the school student's using Gardner's Intra-personal and Inter-personal Intelligences. For this purpose an experimental preliminary study was carried out by the researcher in different schools and it was observed that language learning was not given priority. A structured questionnaire based on Gardner's Intra-personal and Inter-personal Intelligences was administered to 100 randomly selected students. After collecting data from the learners, their perceptions were analyzed, tabulated and interpreted. There are seven questions under each category and for each question, three options such as frequently, sometimes, Never were given. From the given options the result was given in the form of Low, Medium or High use of each intelligence.

Intra –personal intelligence

People with intrapersonal intelligence are skilled at self-reflection and know themselves very well. Learners with strong Intrapersonal intelligence have a deep awareness of their feelings, ideas and goals. Students with this intelligence usually spend time alone to give productive results.

The questions under the Intra-Personal Intelligence were asked to find out how the learners have the ability to understand themselves, appreciate their own feelings, fears and motivations..

- I have a very high self esteem
- I display a sense of independent or strong will
- I like to write my thoughts and feelings in a diary
- I like doing things by myself
- I usually know what my feelings are
- I like to spend time thinking or writing about things that matter to me.

Inter-Personal Intelligence

It involves effective verbal and non verbal communication, the ability to note distinctions among others, sensitivity to the moods of others, and the ability to entertain multiple perspectives. Learners strong in Interpersonal intelligence have a natural ability to interact with, relate to, and get along with others effectively. They are good leaders. They like to interact with others and usually have lot of friends

The questions under the Inter personal intelligence were asked to find out the learners ability to understand and interact effectively with others.

- Friends are important to me
- I like to talk in class discussions
- I enjoy playing games with other kids.
- I have concern for other people's feelings.
- Study Group's are productive for me.
- I enjoy working in a team
- I enjoy group activities

After working on the questionnaire, the average results were calculated through liked scale.

| Interpersonal Intelligence | 2.2 |
| Intrapersonal Intelligence | 2.1 |

Training

The aim of this research was to make the learners aware of their inter-personal and intra- personal intelligences, and use them in enhancing their English language skills. A pre test was conducted for 50 randomly selected students. Based on the scores of the sample learners the training programme was designed. The class was further divided into two groups:

- The experimental group
- The control group

.An intensive training programme was designed by the researcher to give training to the experimental group in language learning using the multiple intelligences, by including a variety of language activities in their routine. The control group on the other hand continued with the same teaching techniques used in the school. The training schedule was conducted for a period of 1 week.

Sl. No.	Name of the test	Average score
1	Pre test (Entire Group)	21
2	Post Test (Control Group)	23
3	Post Test (Experimental Group)	31

People with **intrapersonal intelligence** are adept at looking inward and figuring out their own feelings, motivations and goals. The learners worked on the following activities to improve their English language skills using their intra personal intelligence.

Activity 1

The learners were given opportunities for setting goals and planning for the progress towards their goals. The researcher asked the learners to list three short term goals, that they wanted to accomplish shortly and three long term goals they wanted to achieve ten years from then.

The learners were surprised that they had these ambition in them, as they were never brainstormed and encouraged to come out with their goals. At the end of the activity, the learners had a clearer focus on what they wanted to achieve. Their decision making skill helped them in communicating confidently with peers around them.

Activity 2

The researcher asked the learners if they had a hobby, what was it, describing how and when they took it up, why they enjoy it and finally how they planned to continue in with it in the future. The learners never really got on opportunity to work on their hobbies. Though they had their favorite past time, they never felt the need to think about it in detail. Finally, after the researcher boosted up their confidence, they wrote about their favorite hobby. By the end of the activity, they realized that hobbies are great stress busters, and once in a relaxed mood they can discuss about their hobby with their friends and in the process improve their communication skills

Activity 3

N. PRATHYUSHA

The learners were asked to create a timeline, where in they should be writing the events of the previous week, describing how that week was spent and If they had any exciting or sorrowful moments

Initially the learners were reluctant to finish this activity as they felt that there would be nothing to write about a week in their life. But after a little motivation and brainstorming they started writing and were surprised to see that they had so many intricacies and details in their day to day routine. By the end of this activity the learners got an opportunity to introspect into their life, thus enhancing their writing and language skills.

Interpersonal intelligence is the ability to step into the shoes of someone else, seeking to understand their feelings and how they see the world, and to use that understanding to help guide a person's interactions with them. The learners worked on the following activities to improve their English language skills using their inter personal intelligence.

Activity 4

The learners were divided into pairs and a situation was given to the learners, wherein a girl has to stop her education as her family is facing financial crisis. The researcher asked the learners to enact a conversation between the two friends giving a possible solution. At the end of the activity, the learners not only came up with a possible solution but also enhanced their linguistic, communicative and language skills.

Activity 5

The researcher asked the learners to collect two detailed advertisements by different companies of cell phones or any other electronic gadget. They were then asked to compare the features of the two rival company products, giving advice to the buyer on which one is better. At the end of the activity, the learners came out with best possible solution, improving upon his leadership and language skills. Good interpersonal communication skills enabled the learners to work more effectively in groups and teams.

Activity 6

Role plays are an excellent way of getting the students practice their English. They simulate real life situations and allow them to act out what they would do in a real situation. A topic "phoning to make a complaint" was given to the learners and were asked to enact the situation.

Many learners came forward for the role play as the topic given to them was a part of their real life situation .The learners enacted using different reasons for complaining. The learners gained confidence and enhanced their English language skills, through this activity.

Post test

After the completion of one week of training, a post test was conducted to measure application and impact of the learning during the training period. The post test was conducted simultaneously to the control group also. The average scores are as follows

Sl. No.	Name of the test	Average score
1	Pre test (Entire Group)	21
2	Post Test (Control Group)	23
3	Post Test (Experimental Group)	31

A significant increase in learning from pre-test to post test was observed in the experimental group after the training programme. The improvement was mainly observed along linguistic and communicative dimensions. It was also found that students felt they developed a natural instinct for learning more with MI inputs intervention. Therefore, the findings clearly suggest that integrating multiple intelligence in the classroom brings benefits to students by actively involving them in the learning process, and encouraging them to learn for themselves.

In addition to the test, an informal discussion was carried out by the researcher with both the groups to check the efficiency of the training programme. The data was documented and the findings are as follows

- A majority of school learners opined that their teachers completed the syllabus only from the examinations point of view.

- The learners asserted that they looked forward for practical knowledge which they would be gaining through discussions and debate.
- The learners appeared to value knowledge more by 'getting it themselves, instead of being handed down by the teacher from the text.
- The inclusive framework of the MI tasks enabled discovery learning to take place within new classroom structures, roles and procedures that evolved as a part of learning.
- The learners never had an opportunity to introspect themselves better i.e., their goals, ambitions, hobbies etc.
- It was observed that the learners never had the chance to explore / exhibit their leadership qualities, as they never got any choice to take lead in the classroom discussions.
- The sample learners tried to evaluate themselves after trying out a new activity as they wanted to know where they stand.
- The learners showed a great interest when learning was combined with physical activities, sports, which was lacking in their present curriculum
- Though the learners were not fluent in speaking English, they tried their best to communicate with their peers in English to enhance their language skills.

Conclusion

As a broad result of the MI project initiated during this study, students, teachers, parents and the management together decided that a multiple learning framework including an anxiety-reducing quotient needed to be planned integrally into the school curriculum itself instead of being confined to any particular period in the timetable as the results shown were very impressive.

Bibliography

Gardner, H. (1983). Frames of mind. The theory of multiple intelligences. New York. Basic Books.

_____., (1993). Frames of the mind: The theory of multiple intelligences 10th Anniversary Edition. New York: Basic Book.

N. PRATHYUSHA