HOW DOES THE MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE KNOWLEDGE INFLUENCE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) INSTRUCTORS' TEACHING STRATEGIES?

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to identify the level of Multiple Intelligence knowledge among the English language instructors in Sabah. 32 respondents from four educational institutions in Kota Kinabalu participated in this research. The data was obtained through a set of questionnaire that was modified and adapted from Thomas Armstrong (1994) to suit the objectives of this research. The modification and adaptation of the research instruments was done to meet the research objectives and the situation of the research. The set of questionnaire comprises of three parts. Part A touches on the demographic characteristics of the English language instructors, part B focuses on the knowledge level of the theory, and Part C targets on the teaching strategies in the English language classrooms. The marks were counted manually to find the connection between the knowledge level of Multiple Intelligences and the teaching strategies of the instructors in the classrooms. The finding of this research indicates that the English language teachers with excellent level of Multiple Intelligence knowledge do not necessarily have excellent varieties of teaching strategies, and vice versa.

Keywords:

Multiple Intelligence Knowledge, ESL, Teachers, Teaching Strategies

Introduction

The Multiple Intelligence (MI) theory was introduced by Harvard University Developmental Psychologist, Howard Earl Gardner in 1983, about 32 years ago. The establishment of Multiple

Intelligence has definitely brought an impact to the education system, although Howard Gardner was actually not designing a curriculum or preparing a model with his theory to be used in schools. Deep interest with Multiple Intelligence lead educators to redesign the theory and put it together in different ways, applied it into their lesson planning, in educational programme, and curriculum development.

The success of teaching and learning English language is actually relying heavily on how language teachers mould learners' motivations and how they deal with students' different personalities, attitudes, abilities and intelligences or uniqueness in a classroom (Madkour & Mohamed, 2016). Therefore, teachers should realize the significance of learners' affective factors (e.g feelings, emotions, tension, anxiety, frustration, needs, interests, motivation and confidence, etc.) and its impact towards the process of learning (Ahmad, Seman, Awang & Sulaiman 2014). As a result from the advent of "humanism" in the 60s of the 20th century, the conventional, authoritative teacher-centered instruction has given way to the learner-centered mode of instruction (Lin, 2006). It is said that this mode of instruction will enhance the success of teaching and learning English language in the classroom, resulting in an increasing widespread of interest among English language teachers to shift the roles of instructors from givers of information to facilitating students learning.

Drawn to the concept of the Multiple Intelligence theory, the MOE implemented this theory in the revised curriculum of the English Language programme for Malaysian schools (Bahagian Pembangunan Kurikulum, 2003). The MOE believes that this theory should be put into practises as it creates a more humane environment for language learning, especially in English as Second Language classrooms (Che Musa, Koo & Azman, 2012). By proposing that each learner possesses a distinctive combination of intelligence, MI theory focuses on the highly individualized way in which people learn. It calls into questions the prevailing policy of educating all students in the same subject with the same methods and materials (Gardner, 1983).

With the integration of MI theory in Malaysia Schools curriculum, MOE has made it compulsory for all English Language teachers to attend courses or in-service programme to help them understand on how to integrate or apply the theory in their respective English language classrooms. English language teachers are expected to know about the theory, and of course its practises in English Language classrooms. They are urged to attend the courses or in-service programme to provide them with a foundation of what they should acquire as professional language educators and thereafter, responsible for creating curriculum or lesson planning based on the newly-acquired theory. The in-service programme was specifically designed by Curriculum Development Centre for English language teachers. The content had been revolutionized by introducing teachers to the latest and most creative ideas in English Language pedagogy (Bahagian Pembangunan Kurikulum, 2003).

It is believed that knowledge of MI theory will influence teachers', especially the ones who teach English language, approaches in teaching the subject. By knowing and understanding the significance of what it has to offer to students' development, English language teachers will implement the concept of MI into the methods of teaching the language. The idea of MI theory will not only diversify teachers' teaching strategies in classrooms, but it also provides a foundation in understanding which approaches students learn the best (Ismail, Maulan & Hasan, 2008). For example, different students have different capabilities in understanding

things. Hence, teachers are not encouraged to use the same methods in teaching students of different level of proficiencies. Students of higher proficiency level may not prefer teachers to use Flashcard teaching strategies in their learning process as it might give an indication that the teacher is looking down upon them by giving easier task, leaving them feeling demotivated. However, the technique might be appropriate to be used with students of lower proficiency level, as visuals on the card will help them to learn better. Realizing the significance of implementing the MI approach in the teaching strategies, Curriculum Development Centre has prepared the Multiple Intelligence schedule for English teachers to refer at. It will give them an idea on how to extend their teaching and learning strategies in other intelligence field (Ismail, 2022).

In order to integrate the Multiple Intelligence theory into the current educational programme, English Language teachers are required to know about concepts or ideas the theory holds (have the knowledge) and how it functions (teaching strategies) in English as Second Language classrooms. On a fundamental level, an effective teacher is described as someone who is successful in promoting learning. Thus, it is significant to know teachers, especially those who promote language learning, their levels of understanding towards the concepts of this theory as it may affects teachers' teaching strategies in different English as Second Language classrooms.

Thus, the aim for this study is to find out the English language teachers' knowledge of Multiple Intelligence theory. The study will also attempt to figure out whether or not the English language teachers are utilizing MI approach in their teaching strategies based on the knowledge, and this should be indirectly inform whether or not they are pursuing the directive from the Ministry of Education Malaysia.

Literature Review

Multiple Intelligence

Multiple Intelligence theory refers to an alternative definition of intelligence proposed by Howard Gardner in 1983. According to Gardner, human have seven separate kinds of intelligences, or more; linguistic intelligence (verbal), musical intelligence, spatial intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, understanding of others (interpersonal), and understanding of self (intrapersonal). Gardner rejects the unitary concept of intelligence and proposes Multiple Intelligences, as he believes that everyone has different potentials and abilities in acquiring new knowledge. As each person has different life experiences, nobody has identical intellectual profiles (Vries, 2014). Although human has all seven intelligences to verifying degree, the combination of these intelligences in everyone creates a unique profile; the same way, everyone has a unique fingerprint profile. Some intelligences may appear to be stronger than others, and a given intelligence may be enhanced and developed over time through new experience and opportunity by learning (Armstrong, 1999). An educator's most significant role is not only to construct meaningful learning experiences for the students but also nurture their strengths and interests for them to realize their full potentials. Thus, educators should see the unique potential of the individual and guide the learners to develop their intelligence through the development of appropriate learning condition (Rief, 2005).

In the field of education, educators who can identify the diversity of the learners in their learning styles, learning potentials, etc. and encourage learners' development through effort in varying teaching strategies in each lesson have actually interpret intelligence based on their own understanding, and this is part of the knowledge that they have derived from the MI theory postulated by Howard Gardner. For English language teacher, the MI theory serves as guidance in predicting learners' preferences on certain teaching strategies in order to help them learn better, as well as for planning instructions in the English language classrooms (Razak & Zaini 2014). Multiple Intelligence is not meant to label or stigmatize students based on their significant domains, but rather encourage educators to acknowledge students' differences in learning, thus redesign the lessons by incorporating different intelligences for the students to actively manifest their preferred learning styles in acquiring the English language (Lin, 2006). While a student may absorb information better through one approach at one point in time, that same student may learn something else better through another approach.

Students do not only have different needs and goals, but they also have distinct favour on language skills to be learned. They vary in the way of perceiving, absorbing, and retaining the lesson, and in solving their problems arise due to the differences of their learning styles and learning strategies in a second language, the students need to identify their predominant intelligence to effectively learn the language (Rief & Heimburge, 2006). Knowing their preferred style of learning may help them to feel confident, even when they do not have the strengths that have traditionally been valued most in the school. By examining their learning style, they will become aware of how their brains learn best and study skills can be enhanced. This way, when the students identified their intelligence and knew the best way to learn the language through those mediums, they start to spark interest and motivate themselves to learn the language (Sulaiman, Sulaiman & Suan, 2011).

Methodology

Participants
Four educational institutions in Kota Kinabalu were selected for the purpose of this research. The subjects are English Language teachers of Foundation Studies/Form Six from the selected institutions in the area. Those participate in this study are optionist English language teachers who are teaching Malaysian University English Test (MUET).

Data Collection and Analysis
This research uses a quantitative methodology. The data used in this study will be in the form of interval scale. The questionnaires are constructed by using Likert Scales (for Part C). In Part C, scale 1 is for NOT AT ALL (NAT), 2 is for NOT FREQUENT (NF), 3 is for FREQUENT (F), and 4 is for VERY FREQUENT (VF). Questions in Part B and C are arranged in positive statements, thus, the more frequent a subject is agreeing to the statements, the higher the subject obtains the scores and vice versa.

This research implements a survey approach in which sets of questionnaires are distributed among English language teachers to record the information needed. Items in the questionnaires are taken from a source that is modified to accommodate the research topic. The set of questions in Part B is modified from Amstrong (1994) to test the English Language teachers' knowledge on MI theory. Part C is adapted from Amstrong (1994) as well, and it focuses on the MI-based teaching strategies of the subjects in the classrooms.

The set of questionnaires consists of 3 parts; Part A is the subjects' demographic information, Part B is the subjects' knowledge on MI theory, and Part C is the subjects' teaching strategies in the English language classrooms. The following is the summary of parts and items:

Table 1: The Distribution of Questionnaire Items Based on Armstrong in Part B & C

Question Category	Item Number	Total
Part A: Demographic Information		
Gender	2	1
Teaching Experience	4	1
Age	5	1
Part B: Knowledge of Multiple Intelligence Theory		
Verbal Linguistic	1, 8, 18	3
Logical Mathematics	2, 14, 19	3
Bodily Kinaesthetic	5, 10, 16	3
Interpersonal	7, 20, 21	3
Musical	3, 9, 17	3
Visual Spatial	4, 12, 15	3
Intrapersonal	6, 11, 13	3
Part C: Teaching Strategies in English Language Classrooms		
Verbal Linguistic	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	7
Logical Mathematics	8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14	7
Bodily Kinaesthetic	22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. 28	7
Interpersonal	36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42	7
Musical	29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 33, 34, 35	7
Visual Spatial	15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21	7
Intrapersonal	43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49	7
Overall Total		75

Data Collection Procedures

The aim of this research is to examine the knowledge level of MI theory among the English language teachers, and whether they utilize the knowledge in the classrooms through the teaching strategies. Hence, the data is gathered primarily through sets of questionnaires designed for English language teachers in two educational institutions of Kota Kinabalu. Each subject will be given a week or two to fill in a set of questionnaires distributed to them.

The questionnaires will be distributed in the second week of April 2022 and collected in the first week of May 2022. Researchers will consult the Principals or representatives of the institutions for consent before distributing the questionnaires. The Head of English Departments of the schools need to be explained briefly about the research, before researcher starts approaching the English language teachers in the schools. All the sets of questionnaires will be collected from the Head of English Department.

Data Analysis

The data gathered will be analyzed by 3 parts in the questionnaire. In Part A, the demographic information of the subjects will be analyzed descriptively by frequency and percentage. In Part B, the knowledge level of MI theory among the English language teachers will be analyzed by marking the 21 items of the questionnaire manually. Each statement belongs to a certain Multiple Intelligence (MI) category, thus the respondents need to identify the statements into

the correct categories in order for them to gain the scores. The results of the MI's knowledge level of the English language teachers are interpreted based on the following score:

Table 2: The Interpretation of Respondents' Knowledge Score

Score	Interpretation	Likert Scale
17 - 21	Excellent knowledge of MI	4
12 - 16	Good knowledge of MI	3
7 - 11	Satisfactory knowledge of MI	2
0 - 6	Little knowledge of MI	1

For Part C, the seven (7) teaching strategies in the classrooms are evaluated by scores. It means all the items will be marked manually. Subjects need to score within the range of marks to be placed into different categories. The higher the marks he or she obtains for all the seven teaching strategies, the higher the total scores, hence it will give an indication that the subjects fully utilize the knowledge of MI theory and implement it into the teaching strategies. It will show the connection between the knowledge level of MI theory among the English language teachers and their teaching strategies in the language classrooms. The following is the interpretation of marks based on the total score obtained.

Results and Discussion

Table 3: The Numbers of Returned Questionnaire

Educational Institutions in Kota Kinabalu	The number of questionnaire distributed	The number of questionnaire returned
Preparatory Centre for Science and Technology	10	8
Form Six College	10	9
SM All Saints	10	9
SMK Likas	10	6
Total	40	32

From 40 sets of questionnaire distributed to the respondents, only 32 were completed and returned.

Part A: Demography (Respondents' Profile Descriptive Analysis)
The respondents who took part in this research are 32 English language teachers of Foundation Studies/Form Six in Kota Kinabalu. The demographic characteristics of the respondents include option, gender, academic qualification, teaching experience, and age.

Gender
Based on the data collected, 23 English language female teachers make up 72 percent of the total respondents, whereas the other 9 respondents are English language male teachers. The females dominate the males by 44 percent.

Table 4: Respondents' Genders

Respondents' Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender		
Male	23	72
Female	9	28
Total	32	100

Teaching Experience

Five categories of teaching experience were being listed in this study. The number of respondents who have 1 to 5 years of teaching experience is 5, picking up the 16 percent while 8 of them have 6 to 10 years of teaching experience, which shows 25 percent. Other 11 respondents with 11 to 15 years of teaching experience which contributes to 34 percent, and 5 respondents with 16 to 20 years of teaching experience covers up 16 percent of the total sample population. The remaining 9 percent is those with 21 years and above teaching experiences, which are 3 of the total English language teachers who participated in this study.

Table 5: Respondents' Teaching Experience

Respondents' Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage %
Teaching Experience		
1-5 years	5	16
6-10 years	8	25
11-15 years	11	34
16-20 years	5	16
21 years and above	3	9
Total	32	100

Age

The respondents who took part in this research belong to 5 categories of age. 8 of them aged in between 26 to 30 years old, makes up 25 percent of the total sample population respectively. Other 11 respondents are aged in between 31 to 35 years old, covers up 34 percent and 7 of them are 36 to 40 years old, which shows 22 percent. The totals of 6 respondents pick up the remaining 19 percent, for those who aged 41 and above.

Table 6: Respondents' Age

Respondents' Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage %
Age		
< 25 years old	0	0
26-30 years old	8	25
31-35 years old	11	34
36-40 ears old	7	22
>41 years old	6	19
Total	32	100

Part B: Multiple Intelligence (MI) Knowledge Level of English Language Teacher

The data collected represents 32 English language teachers who took part in this research. None of the respondents is categorized under little knowledge of MI level. However, an additional 8 respondents are classified under satisfactory knowledge of MI level and account for 25 percent of the total sample population. Over 9 percent of the English language teachers have an excellent knowledge of MI level, which have less than half respondents who obtain the satisfactory level. Most of the respondents obtained good knowledge of MI level, accounted for 66 percent of all the respondents who participated in this research. Below is the statistical information of the Multiple Intelligence (MI) knowledge's level of the English language teachers obtained from the Part B of the questionnaire.

Table 7: Level of MI Knowledge of English Language Teachers

MI Knowledge Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Little Knowledge	0	0
Satisfactory Knowledge	8	25
Good Knowledge	21	66
Excellent Knowledge	3	9
Total	32	100

Part C: Teaching Strategies in English Language Classrooms

According to the data collected, none of the English language teachers scored below 85 marks. It means all of them do not have poor variety of teaching strategies in the English language classrooms. An estimated 31 percent of the respondents have fair variety of teaching strategies to be carried out in the classrooms. Over 20 respondents are classified to have good variety teaching strategies in the classroom and accounts for 69 percent of the total English language teachers who took part in this research. However, none of the respondents have excellent variety teaching strategies when they teach English language. Below is the statistical information of the teaching strategies that have been carried out by English language teachers in the classrooms.

Table 8: Variation of Teaching Strategies in English Language Classrooms

Teaching Strategies of the English Language Teachers	Frequency	Percentage %
Poor variety of teaching strategies	0	0
Fair variety of teaching strategies	10	31
Good variety of teaching strategies	22	69
Excellent variety of teaching strategies	0	0
Total	32	100

The Connection of the English Language Teachers' MI Knowledge Level and the Teaching Strategies in the Classrooms

For this part, the respondents' knowledge level of the Multiple Intelligence theory and its connection to the teaching strategies in the classrooms will be analysed. Below are the statistical information of the respondents' knowledge level and its reflection towards the teaching strategies in the English language classrooms. *(*Note that there is no statistical information on the little knowledge level of MI category as none of the respondents belongs to that group.)*

Based on the findings stated earlier, 8 English language teachers were found to have satisfactory level of MI knowledge compared to the other 24 respondents who took part in this research. It is assumed that those who belong to this category would have fair teaching strategies to be used in the classrooms. Surprisingly, after the sets of questionnaire were being analysed individually, it is found that those who have satisfactory level of MI knowledge have good teaching strategies in the English language classrooms. It does not truly reflect what was expected from this group, but it really shows a positive sign to the teaching trends among teachers, particularly in secondary schools of Bandar Baru Bangi. Even though they do not have much knowledge on this theory, but they understand the concept of the MI and utilize it in producing good variation of teaching strategies in the classrooms. If they were given chances to gain more knowledge on this theory, I believe they will implement not just good, but excellent teaching strategies in the classrooms. Thus, English language teachers who have satisfactory level of MI knowledge do not necessarily portray fair variety of teaching strategies, because sometimes the variation is even more.

Table 9: Respondents' Satisfactory Level of MI Knowledge and Its Reflection towards Teaching Strategies in the Classrooms.

Respondents with Satisfactory Level of MI Knowledge	Teaching Strategies in the English Language Classrooms
Respondent 1	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 2	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 4	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 6	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 11	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 22	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 26	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 32	Good variety of teaching strategies

In table 9, majority of the English language teachers who obtained good level of MI knowledge have good variety of teaching strategies in the classrooms. Based on the findings, 13 out of 21 respondents portrayed good variations in the teaching approaches and techniques; however, the remaining 8 showed otherwise. They only managed to obtain scores below 123 marks, which means they portrayed just fair teaching strategies in English language classrooms. Those who have good variation of teaching strategies are believed to understand the concept of the MI really well and aware of the students' potentials in learning the targeted language. They try to reach the students in many ways possible, hence explains the multiple strategies they implement in the classroom. Each types of Multiple Intelligence is explored in different teaching strategies just to develop students' interests and abilities as they are unique as individual. However, the remaining 8 respondents who only portrayed fair teaching strategies even though they have good knowledge of the theory is maybe because of limitations they have in schools. Sometimes, lacking of facilities is among the major factors which hinder them from carrying out different activities, especially when it is related to Musical or Musical Spatial. These types of MI need good facilities in the classrooms. Without it, it can be difficult for teachers to develop variation into teaching strategies. Thus, English language teachers with good level of MI knowledge do not necessarily portray good teaching strategies in the classrooms.

Table 10: Respondents' Good Level of MI Knowledge and Its Reflection towards Teaching Strategies in the Classrooms

Respondents with Good Level of MI Knowledge	Teaching Strategies in the English Language Classrooms
Respondent 5	Fair variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 8	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 9	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 10	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 12	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 13	Fair variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 14	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 15	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 16	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 17	Fair variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 18	Fair variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 19	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 20	Fair variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 21	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 23	Fair variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 24	Fair variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 25	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 27	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 28	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 29	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 30	Good variety of teaching strategies

In table 11, it shows that the English language teachers who have excellent knowledge of MI do not entirely reflect their knowledge towards the teaching strategies in the classrooms. 2 out of 3 respondents only portray fair variety of teaching strategies, and the other is only good variety. The deep understanding on this theory does not guarantee someone to have excellent teaching strategies because sometimes, there are factors that may affect teachers' performances in teaching such as schools' facilities. This group scored the lowest on the Musical and Visual Spatial items in Part C. I believe they do not have time to go through long procedures to book the room equipped with the facilities or just to use certain tools each time they want to teach the students. In some schools, teachers need to make an effort to bring the technology tools themselves. This may actually affect the teachers' motivation in teaching the students in different approaches; hence decide to just stick to the old method of teaching by using textbooks and whiteboards. Thus, English language teachers who have excellent level of MI knowledge do not portray the excellent variety of strategies, but instead they are just settled down with fair and good varieties of teaching strategies.

Table 11: Respondents' Excellent Level of MI Knowledge and Its Reflection towards Teaching Strategies in the Classrooms.

Respondents with Excellent Level of MI Knowledge	Teaching Strategies in the English Language Classrooms
Respondent 3	Fair variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 7	Good variety of teaching strategies
Respondent 31	Fair variety of teaching strategies

Conclusion

Teachers play the most significant role to promote learning. It is important for teachers to create a positive and supportive environment in the classrooms, so they will have positive attitudes towards learning the English language (Sarjit Singh, 2015). If teachers understand the concept of this theory, they must be deeply aware that learners have different abilities and potentials, especially in learning a new language. Thus, teachers will use different approaches and styles to teach, as they want to develop each and every potential within the students.

Teachers should take initiatives to increase knowledge on the MI theory and adopt the theory into teaching, especially in English language classrooms. It is not really enough just to know and understand the concept of it, but teachers must take initiatives to apply it into teaching strategies. Even though it has been introduced into the curriculum for more than two decade, but Ministry of Education should initiate more enrichment programmes or courses for these teachers to increase the knowledge. However, the contents need to be updated, as the students nowadays are too exposed to a high volume of technology. Teachers must be aware of the potential hindrances technology could bring to the learning process, and at the same time applying the MI-based teaching strategies in the English language classrooms.

Moreover, teachers could set up a new teaching trend in the school by applying the MI-based teaching strategies. It will generate creativity among learners and develop the self-potentials within. Hence, for further research, it is highly recommended for researchers to carry out a qualitative method by interviewing the teachers. By this method, researchers could figure out the real reasons teachers refuse to implement the MI approach, even if they have knowledge on it. Most of them believe that implementing this would mean an extra work for them. But if they spend some time to draft out plan for different teaching strategies of MI, it will be useful for them and others as well. This will certainly help the teachers to be effective and creative.

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