The relationship between multiple intelligences and English proficiency among pre-university students in Sabah at a higher education institution in Sabah

ABSTRACT

This study sets out to examine whether English proficiency levels is primarily related to a specific intelligence. Intelligence plays an important role to effectively learn a language and often times, a verbal-linguistic intelligence is associated with it. A lingustically-inclined student is assumed to have good mastery in English skills because possessing high level of verbal-linguistic intelligence equates to high ability in using the language well through oral and written form. However, much uncertainty still exists about the verbal-linguistic domain and its relation to the students' high English proficiency levels, and this study therefore sets out to assess an intelligence which is correlated with the ability to use the language effectively. The objective of this paper is to identify which intelligence is positively associated with the ability to achieve good grades in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) English language. A demographic questionnaire and the Multiple Intelligence Profiling Questionnaire (MIPQ III) were administered to 60 pre-university students of Preparatory Centre of Science and Technology, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia., whom were purposively selected for this research. The data were collected and analyzed using the correlation tests. The findings reveal that the students with high interpersonal intelligence were inclined to achieve good grades in the language examination. Achieving good results in the SPM English language equates to being highly proficient in the language, thus disproves the notion that the linguistically-inclined students have good mastery in English skills. This study calls Malaysian English educators to acknowledge students' differences in learning, thus creating a conducive classroom experience and redesign the lessons by incorporating all intelligence for the students to actively manifest their preferred learning styles in acquiring English language. Future research would include more language skills to be examined in a bigger number of students.