

INTRAPERSONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MOTIVATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

The Multiple Intelligences Theory proposes a pluralistic view of mind which takes into account people have different cognitive potential. Thus, suggests the existence of at least eight intelligences of equal rank: the linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, intrapersonal, interpersonal and naturalist intelligence.

This study proposed a programme based in the intrapersonal intelligence in order to increase the students motivation. The result have shown that a methodology which develops the intrapersonal intelligence helps the students to know himself and hence apply this knowledge to develop learning strategies based on their strong points.

Keywords: Intrapersonal intelligence, L2 learning, motivation

Introduction

The multiple intelligences theory (MIT) Howard Gardner (1993) was a revolution not only in the way of understanding human behavior and cognition, but also the modus operandi of researchers, teachers and examiners. According to this theory, the mind does not work as a unit, by contrast, proposes a pluralistic view of the mind, which recognizes many different facets of cognition, which takes into account people have different cognitive potentials and cognitive styles (Gardner, 1993).

Gardner (1983) suggests the existence of at least seven intelligences of equal rank: the linguistic and logical-mathematical correspond to general intelligence defined by Piaget; musical, bodily-kinesthetic and spatial correspond to the Arts; and intrapersonal and interpersonal, which has been called emotional intelligence are the so-called personal intelligences. Then includes the naturalist intelligence, so today we talk about nine intelligences, as subsequently mentioned more, corresponding to brain modules whose job is to control and channel the various data from an external source or

generated by the individual, these data could have music, logic or language information.

The intrapersonal intelligence is defined by Rubio (2002) as the ability to understand oneself, recognizing emotions, personal strengths and weaknesses, and the ability to solve thinking, conflicts that destabilize psychological balance or homeostasis. This intelligence, therefore, is a key to develop other intelligences, and therefore allows teachers to encourage learners' achievement in the L2 classroom.

However, there are some internal and external factors that make the student a particularly hard case in L2, according to Goleman (1996) emotion covers feelings, thoughts, biological states, psychological states and the type of action tendencies that characterize them. For this reason there are hundreds of emotions and mixtures, variations, mutations and nuances among them. Therefore, the attitude, motivation and personality of the student are entirely related to the intrapersonal intelligence, and hence the development of this intelligence can be beneficial and satisfying for both students and teachers of foreign languages.

Since in most cases the students' need to learn the L2 responds to an explicit desire (stays abroad, need language to work, earn a certificate, travel ...), there are factors that may be more latent than others, and this is the case of motivation. This article will show how the application of multiple intelligences, namely the development of intrapersonal intelligence, promotes motivation in the language classroom improving the student performance.

The intrapersonal intelligence in the L2 classroom

Intrapersonal intelligence helps individuals to make judgments and distinctions between their own thoughts, to build appropriate mental models of themselves and rely on those models when making decisions about their own lives. Facilitates access to his/her inner life, essential to know oneself, allowing self-awareness, self-understanding, self-motivation and control of behavior, emotions and own forms of expression. Although it is difficult to assess the extent to which an individual has more or less developed capacity, you can search for evidence or indication of it in the way the student uses other intelligences, e.g. in how they are able to rely on their stronger points and the degree to which they are aware of their weaknesses, and to what extent they reflect on their decisions and choices that perform. Individuals who possess this intelligence have developed a deep sense of self-confidence and independence and strong will (Gardner, 1993). Following these assumptions in the classroom the students can develop a working method exploiting their strong and weak intelligences, promoting independent learning and increasing their motivation.

Since the emergence of learner-centered instruction, methods focused on learning English have been aimed at meeting the needs and interests of learners taking into account their individual differences, therefore, it has been associated with certain intelligences. Thus, the Silent way emphasizes the development of students' thinking inside-intrapersonal intelligence, and encourages self-reflection on skills and learning preferences; theory of total physical response, however, emphasizes language learning through the physical body-intelligence or kinetic action, which is very positive for intellectual performance because movement increases the amount of oxygen in the brain; It is suggested emphasizing the use of music -musical intelligence- in the classroom, which provides focus, creativity, relaxation and motivation to facilitate knowledge of language. Cooperative learning focuses on the importance of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationship to language learning by encouraging the creation of groups and relationships with others, while helping to develop strategies for peer socialization and empathy, which also encourages learner self-esteem. Whole language learning not only emphasizes the integrity and reality of language -linguistic intelligence- but also in coordinating kinetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences to promote language learning. As for the visual-spatial intelligence, the systematic use of mental imagery is an effective learning strategy in a neurolinguistic programme.

Teaching strategies that develop intrapersonal intelligence as one-minute periods of reflection is very important, These periods give students time to assimilate the information presented or to relate it to their own lives, also involve a change of pace that helps them stay tuned for the next activity. Tasks related to personal relationships (Armstrong, 2006) are suggested, for example: What does this have to do with my life?, where they can do personal associations and express feelings and experiences, as well as let the students share their experiences before starting to explain. It is also interesting when providing options to students, giving students the opportunity to make decisions about their learning experiences and enabling the option to do a task or another. Some sessions may be used to set goals, because one of the most common characteristics among students to developed intelligence is the ability to set realistic goals for themselves. It is also interesting when providing options, giving students the opportunity to make decisions about their learning experiences and enabling the option to do a task or another. Another activity is to expose feelings in the classroom, it is necessary to look for times when students laugh, get angry and express opinions, such as conducting debates. Some sessions may be used to set goals; because one of the most common characteristics among intrapersonal students is the ability to set realistic goals for themselves.

In this sense, Bogod (1998) notes that it is helpful to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of oneself; reflect about oneself and analyze oneself; be aware of inner feelings, desires and dreams; assess patterns of thought; and understand the role that you play against other people. Christison (1998) apply these guidelines to classroom and proposes a teaching focus on the realization of work and individual projects, the students choice of their duty, conducting inventories and checklists daily.

Thus, the intrapersonal intelligence is essential to the growth of the student as an individual, it will provide the ability to understand internal aspects and implement self-discipline, fundamental, for example, to set schedules and routines, develop learning strategies and know your own limitations...

Motivation

Psychological and emotional factors that influence student motivation are vital for the learner, so that, understanding and controlling these factors can help to succeed in L2 acquisition. Ultimately, enhance intrapersonal intelligence in the classroom may affect the increase of student motivation and therefore learner performance.

According to Goleman (1995) the ability to motivate yourself is one of the largest capacities related to intrapersonal intelligence. Motivation, in turn, plays a key role in language learning so the higher motivation increases better learning. If the students feel positive emotions in the classroom, this is reflected immediately in their learning process. This makes the student aware of their progress and their intrapersonal intelligence develops more strongly, as well as their other intelligences.

Attitudes towards the language you want to learn and be able to contribute to the community and culture of the language you want to learn. In effect it can affect L2 learners' confidence or anxiety and fear. The age and stage of development are internal factors that can determine the degree of motivation. In general, psychosocial factors are the motivation and attitude which are used to maximize learning and development of interlanguage of L2. It is considered one of the key factors that can determine the L2 learner profile.

Motivation is a socio-psychological construct often used to consider the differential success in learning a second language. Individuals who are more motivated learn L2 quickly. It seems clear that some degree of motivation involves the decision to start learning a second language and then to continue the learning process. It is worth mentioning that those who experience success in L2 communication are among the most motivated to learn, therefore, motivation can be either the result or a cause of success. An

inherent feature of motivation is that it is not a static construct, it changes depending on the context.

The learner can be affected by various types of motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). Those who have an instrumental motivation are those who want to learn the L2 for a utilitarian purpose or goal, such as getting a job or making a scientific publication, but not for some social purpose. In contrast, those learners with a comprehensive motivation want to learn the L2 for social purposes, to form part of the social life of the community, using the language and becoming an accepted member of this community.

The relationship between intrapersonal intelligence and motivation Program Description

Based on the theoretical concepts introduced it has been designed and implemented in L2 teaching and learning program in order to encourage student motivation including tasks focused on the development of their intrapersonal intelligence while developing communication skills.

The student reflection on language, as we have seen, has a very important role because they can raise questions about the level of anxiety, the focus of interest, short-term goals, etc... In this sense, we consider it vital to allocate a few minutes of class as to develop this intelligence. We believe that in this way the students obtain advantages because analyzing their own strengths and weaknesses they can act accordingly.

According to Rubio (2002: 122) there are some types of activities that develop intrapersonal intelligence depending on the content: contextual and personal. The context may be particularly significant for students abroad studying a foreign language, since it refers to the personal experiences of students in relation to their surroundings; while personal can become a psychological one and it doesn't depend on experience but on emotions, thoughts and feelings.

The application of intrapersonal intelligence in the classroom regarding their motivation is essential to the activities implementation, not only for the students but also for teachers whose knowledge can help to control their thoughts and actions according to the reality that is presented in the classroom. The program has been divided into three phases. In the first phase, students learn new grammar need so that they can analyze the intrapersonal information during the first days; in the second phase, the designed tasks especially for that type of grammar are implemented; finally, in the third phase, student's motivation and intrapersonal intelligence are evaluated.

According to students' development evaluation, we adapted the *class evaluation sheet* (Rubio, 2002) where students must answer from 0 to 5 depending on their agreement or disagreement with the following issues: I've

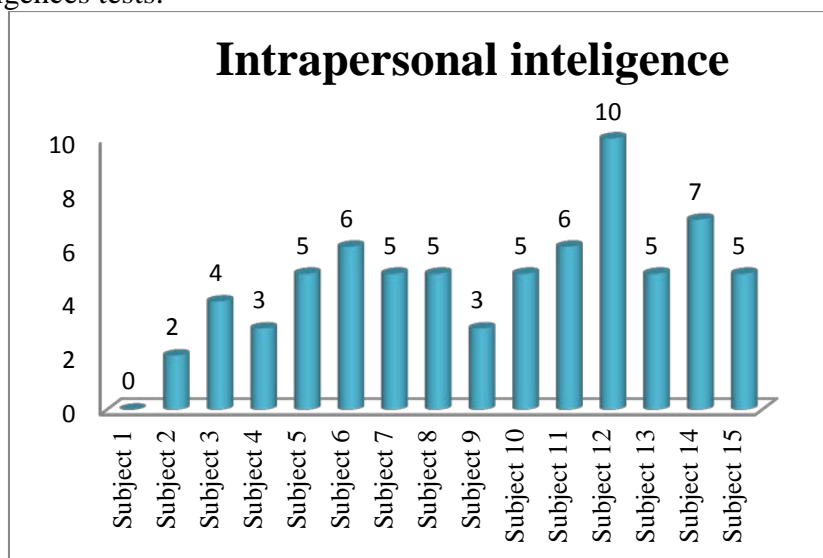
had fun, I've tried my best, I've learnt new things and I've participated. It activates student intrapersonal intelligence. In the words of Rubio (2002, 131) the purpose is: *to have students think about their learning experience, how they react to what has-been done in class; to encourage self-evaluation.*

Students complete the evaluation sheet of intrapersonal intelligence in the classroom once a week. The students complete the questionnaire when the lesson has ended, each lesson typically lasts a week with a total of ten teaching hours. Thus, the students were given ten minutes to reflect on their weekly performance in the classroom, their progress if any, their weaknesses and strengths in the language classroom ... Once the questionnaire is made the student handed it to the teacher, so that he in turn obtained weekly data on their students' performance, difficulty of the task... and this data can be used to modify or not the teaching methodology.

Students profile

The learners are studying L2 without a clear goal. Most of them want to learn L2 to communicate with others in their community or because they like L2 language and culture. However they are unmotivated because they think L2 is too difficult so that they won't be able to learn it.

The study has been developed with fifteen learners who want to reach B1 on the Common European Framework. The starting level is an advanced A2, and most of them are between 19 and 22 years old. In order to get more information about each student's motivation they were interviewed at the beginning and at the end of the course. Also, the students completed multiple intelligences tests:



Most of the students have developed intrapersonal intelligence, although only one student has it totally developed. Students have developed interpersonal intelligence in different ways so what really matters is implementing a programme that encourages the interaction of all intelligences influenced by second language instruction to control factors that could influence second language learning.

The results of the first interview told us that the students were unmotivated. Therefore, to increase the motivation of students in this classroom, we designed tasks to develop intrapersonal intelligence in order to enhance student motivation while the students acquire the language course content. In sum, the data obtained from the initial interview and multiple intelligence tests have been analyzed to increase motivation in developing intrapersonal intelligence effectively and at the same time acquire the language course contents.

Procedure

A program for these students has been created to focus on their needs with the objective to motivate them. A time for reflection and self-study before assessing language acquisition was conducted weekly. The students reflected on their language acquisition through an evaluation sheet where they shared their learning problems, level of personal satisfaction, thoughts on individual performance, etc.

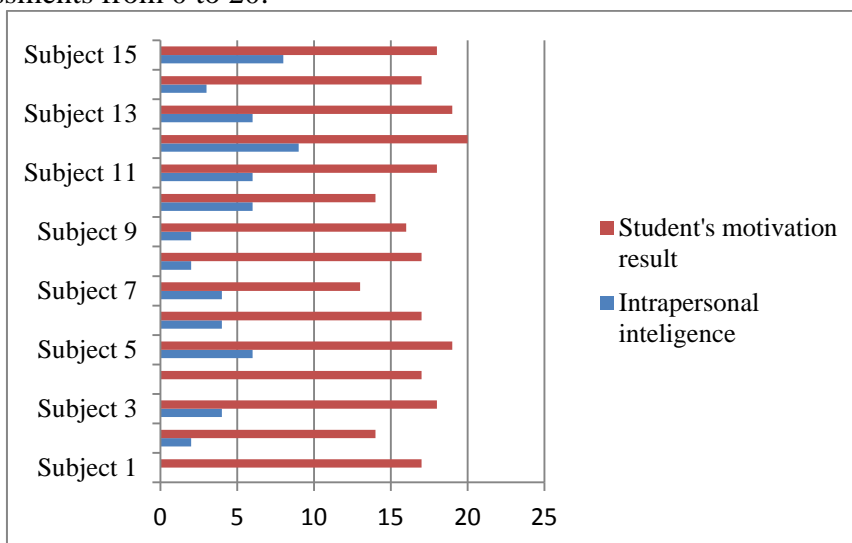
The program was divided into five sessions from Monday to Friday, for four hours a day. A two hour long grammar class was followed by two hours of *communicative skills* where the described programme was implemented.

In addition to the L2 language task based on multiple intelligences theory, initial interviews and weekly evaluation sheets, more interviews were implemented to obtain students' results and to develop speaking and listening skills during the course. In addition, tasks were implemented to focus on listening and speaking skills as well as intrapersonal intelligence. An example of this type of activity is a task where the students individually are asked to repeat a written message in indirect style to the teacher. Students must apply their previously acquired theoretical knowledge about indirect style and change the tense, pronouns and the corresponding particles to convey the message successfully. The student creates a sense of usefulness and practicality while creating a sense of self-improvement: the correct application of the message reflected on their own development and made them become alert to upcoming activities, creating a healthy motivation that comes almost entirely from the intrapersonal intelligence.

Results

The results of this programme are seen immediately in the students through observation so their efforts and improvement increase due to the personal challenges we set for them. The student satisfaction was shown in the results of *class evaluation sheets* completed at the end of each teaching unit in which the student rates from 1 to 5 four aspects of its evolution, in which they obtained the highest score.

The following chart shows a comparison between the student’s intrapersonal intelligence and their assessment of the activity. The intrapersonal intelligence is posted with values from 0 to 10 and student assessments from 0 to 20.



As can be seen, those students with higher intrapersonal intelligence are those who more positively value the programme. However, for those whose intrapersonal intelligence didn’t get significant values, the programme has motivated them largely because they valued it in positively. In either case, it has been offered new ways of learning so the student can use them to acquire L2.

Conclusion

Based on the above findings and the teacher observation in the L2 classroom, we conclude a motivation programme positively affects intrapersonal intelligence implemented in this work.

The application of these teaching methods is an innovative and effective system for learning any L2 language. It is innovative because intrapersonal intelligence has not been applied specifically to the learning-teaching methodologies; it is effective for students with high intrapersonal

intelligence because the presented programme provides incentive for their motivation and personal fulfillment, as well as for provoking-thought and student self-assessment, producing a significant increase in their ability to learn and thus further develop and rapidly acquire L2. Also, this methodology provides learning strategies and develops parts of their intelligence they were not able to develop on their own.

In sum, a programme focused on the development of intrapersonal intelligence and motivation is beneficial for students and teachers. Students develop learning strategies based on their strong points and thus increase their motivation and teachers can implement language programmes successfully.

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