MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES, MULTIPLE EFFECTS: A COLIMA CASE STUDY

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Abstract

It is crucial to train teachers to teach English using Multiple Intelligences (MI) by providing them with the tools to carry out a teaching process that includes students’ interests, likes, and skills. However, incorporating the variety of intelligences into the teaching of vocabulary in English could bring both positive and negative results in the learning process, in the environment, and in the interests of the students.

The following article discusses in depth those aspects on which the use of MI can have an impact. Using a qualitative research approach and having as general objective analysing the effects produced by the activities based on the MI for the teaching of vocabulary in English to the children in the preoperational stages (superior) and the concrete operational, the study was applied to a sample limited to primary school children between six and ten years old in the municipality of Villa de Álvarez, Colima, who experienced working with activities focused on the eight different intelligences.

The data collection was done through three different instruments: a test to determine the predominant intelligence of each student, a researcher’s field diary, and a subjects’ survey to evaluate each activity. In addition, parental authorization for using video recording and photography was requested as evidence of the study.

The obtained results are somewhat surprising, since they showed that although the student’s predominant intelligence works as motor which motivates and keeps the student interested and participative, it can also be a counterproductive force that distracts the student from completing the learning process as expected.

Keywords: Teaching-learning English, acquisition of vocabulary, Multiple Intelligences.

1 INTRODUCTION

Schools are where students spend most of their life studying, it takes 15 years to get to college since you have to spend three years in kindergarten, six years in elementary, three in junior high and three more in high school from three years in kindergarten, to 20 years in college. It is altogether, schools and homes, where students take the desire and motivation for learning [1]. The student demonstrates some abilities, likes, interests and motivations, which make the learning process possible or even pause it. In the classrooms it is very important to work with activities that apprentices like, since nowadays there are still classrooms with bored and disinterested students, even who come to have a bad relationship with the one who provides the teaching, the teacher [2].

This event can vary for many reasons, but one of them is that the teacher does not develop activities or tasks in which students feel that they excel, that is, activities where students feel that they are good at are not carried out or included on the lesson plan [3]. Conversely, students only visualize that their partner next door is having a great time because of that activity or task was of his interest or easy for him [4]. This is linked to the motivation that the teacher awakens, and this motivation is developed and stimulated in order to avoid extinguishing it [5]. Once the teacher is aware that students does not learn in the same way and does not have the same interests as the other ones, the teacher is able to provide at least some variety of activities in each class, until working with interesting activities for students be a routine [6].

To break with this paradigm, a research project was carried out in Villa de Álvarez, Colima, in a program named Programa de Inglês para Niños (PIN), which aimed to analyse the effects that multiple intelligences had on students’ motivation and in the environment into the teaching-learning process of vocabulary in English in kids from six to ten years old. Throughout this article we will present the literature that supports the essence of this study, that is, the theories that support it, as well as the main objective of the study, the methodology and finally the results. It should be mentioned that al the beginning of the
study the researches supposed that only positive effects will be found, however, some negative effects were encountered over the study.

2 METHODOLOGY

The research carried out, as already mentioned in the previous section, focused on knowing and analyse the effects of the use of MI strategies in the teaching-learning of English vocabulary in children between six and ten years old.

Firstly, in order to achieve the research objective, it was essential to have ideas or questions that could in some way guide and limit the project; that is, it was proposed to know the characteristics of the activities focused on the IM in the teaching-learning of vocabulary that were implemented in the research sessions, as well as to know how they influence and what these activities produce in the motivation, in the relationship between students and in the classroom environment.

On the other hand, in general, the research had a qualitative approach. According to Sherman & Webb this method focuses on obtaining abstract and subjective information about the participants, focusing on aspects such as: perspectives, points of view, emotions, experiences, meanings, priorities, relationships between the participants both collective and individual, and so on [7], [8].

Within a qualitative approach is found as a type of research method: Case study, which explained from the perspective of Stake, Yin and Flick, is considered a qualitative tool that allows acquiring personality data, values, attitudes, among others involve a society, since it works in real situations [9], [10], [11].

As a data collection technique, participative observation, video and photography recording, the survey, the field diary and test were used. Each of these techniques used in an appropriate manner, make an excellent work team, in this research was collected all relevant, interesting, surprising information with the assistance of these instruments.

Broadly speaking, in order to produce an investigation that has a relevant contribution to society, it is essential to limit the object of study, as well as the approach it will have and the method to be used. Subsequently, the data collection instruments are selected, which will allow the researcher to obtain relevant and important information for the area that is being studied. Once the information is collected, it goes through a process of analysis which will allow to answer the uncertainties raised at the beginning of the study [12], [13].

3 RESULTS

As we mentioned before, we supposed to find only positives effects of using Multiple Intelligences in teaching-learning of vocabulary in English, but it was amazingly surprising to get unexpected data that help to achieve the principal objective. In the next paragraphs we will share the different favourable and unexpected effects, as well as, some aspects that in certain way helped to get those effects.

3.1 Effects from the Application of Multiple Intelligences

Along the research many effects were found which had a positive and negative impact in the teaching-learning process. Some activities focused on Multiple Intelligences (MI), had a suitable impact, mainly in student’s motivation, interest, performance, participation, environment, behaviour and leadership, since the activities allowed to students develop their creativity, learn how to work in team and individually, as well as, they offered a friendly environment.

However, the activities focused on MI, not only had an acceptable impact, but also had a dissatisfactory outcome. Some activities provoked that students got distracted and felt anxious, bored and nervous, as well as, showed an unacceptable attitude, even disinterest and apathy. The use on MI came to provoked distraction and disinterest on some students, due to their predominant intelligence was developed and they were caught by the environment that the intelligence triggered, instead the development of the activity, at the same time if the developed intelligence were not their predominant one, students felt they were not so good as the other ones.

It is important to mention that the activities focused on the eight different intelligences, had dissimilar effects on account of, students showed different predominant intelligence. According to the instrument Test to know students’ predominant intelligence, 15 out of 19 have a single predominant intelligence, which nine are bodily-kinesthetics, one is linguistic, one is musical, one is logical-mathematical and two
naturalists. On the other hand, there are those who have two or even four predominant intelligences, such is the case of two participants who share the naturalistic intelligence, but at the same time one is interpersonal and the other bodily-kinesthetics; while two other participants share bodily-kinesthetics and naturalistic intelligence, but in turn, one is also musical and spatial, while the other one is logical-mathematical and interpersonal.

3.2 Factors as Contributors in Effects

Over the research of the effects produced by IM in the classroom, specifically in the language area such as vocabulary, it was found some factors which played an important role into the expected and unprovided impact that the IM activities had:

First of all, some factors that contribute to get beneficial effects in the teaching-learning process of vocabulary in English, were time, clearness of instructions, student’s concentration and characteristics of activities. Over the research, time played a great role, since the stipulated time helped to students to be active due to, some activities had specific duration and participants had to completed. Time also helped to the teacher to have a good control and management with activities’ development and transition. Other factors as clearness of instructions and students’ concentration allowed to make easier the process of teaching-learning with MI. The clear instructions made the students felt certain about what and how to do it during the activities, and at the same time, student’s centralization helped both, to the teacher to guide better the activities and to students to spend less time trying to understand.

At the same time some factors that interfered to find favourable effects were time, characteristics of activities and students’ concentration, mood and participation. In general, these factors affected teaching-learning process. The factor time affected the student’s rhythm of work causing that students felt stressed avoiding they could have a good performance over the activity. Besides, some characteristics of activities provoked that students did not show interest in participating due to students perceived the activities were hard or boring. The student’s concentration also affected in transition of activities and in teaching-learning process, since the students were not focused on what and how they had to do it, teacher had to spend more time trying to make the students understand, time passed and students started felt that they were not good in that specific activity.

3.3 Strategies as aids in Effects

Strategies had an important role in the findings of effects on IM activities. One of the strategies was the classroom arrangement over the development of activities, for example the use of team, group or individual task which allowed to the teacher to have a better management while the activities were carried out.

Another strategy was the way in which the teacher provided the IM. Over the research the IM were given through games, music, outside activities, and visual and tangible aids, as well as, students were given extra support, personalized attention and a friendly rapport. In addition, some strategies to make students reflect about their mistakes and doubts were given to them, for example, the teachers asked them some questions to guide them to find the right answer and to find a better and easier way to solve what caused problem.

4 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, over this article we talked about a case study focused on the effects of using Multiple Intelligences in the teaching-learning of vocabulary in English in kids from six to ten years old, supporting by a qualitative approach.

At the beginning we expected only to obtain positive results about the benefits of using the MI, such as, how they increase their motivation and help to improve the environment and students’ relationship.

With the support of some instruments to collect data, such as: 1) Test to determine the predominant intelligence of each student, 2) researcher’s field diary, and 3) survey to evaluate each activity, we could find that the use of IM can influence on students’ learning process and behaviour not only in a favourable manner, but also provoking undesirable effects.
4.1 Factors and strategies

On the other hand, we also discovered some other aspects that allowed us to give an answer to the problem; factors and strategies. The found factors and strategies played an important role as complementation to the effects, since they allowed to make easier the development of activities and its comprehension. We found that the use of MI can develop student’s creativity, increase their participation and improve their behaviour, but also MI caused that some students got distracted or disinterested for those activities where their predominant intelligence were not developed.

It is important that teachers be aware that the same situation can happen, since there are students which have more than one predominant intelligence or even, they have a high degree of some of them, this would help a lot due to students not only enjoy activities for one intelligence but in many of them. As well as, it is important that teachers be capable of leading the MI in the better manner, they have to know the characteristics that each intelligence show or how they work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to thank to the Faculty of Foreign Languages’ head master for facilitating the financial resources to register in EDULEAR 2019. This experience gave us the opportunity of growing both professional and personal, since it challenged us to do our best in every moment, as well as learning and improving our team work.

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