

# The Effect of Learners' Autonomy and Multiple Intelligences on Grammar Proficiency

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**Abstract-** In recent years, learners' autonomy has been given a great amount of attention in the educational system. A lot of studies about learner autonomy were conducted in terms of different viewpoints (Oracki & Gelisli, 2017) It has become one of the intriguing phenomena in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Joshi, K. (2011). As far as learners' skills are concerned, a theory has been very influential to the scholars and researchers in terms of understanding the development of each individual. Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence. Most people agree that grammar does need to be taught. It is not something that is necessarily amusing or thrilling to acquire. However, learners can only learn to express themselves well using complete sentences. It is quite difficult to learn the rules or usage of grammar without being guided. Learning grammar is not just about errors and correctness but to help us to comprehend and appreciate how to create meaningful, clear and precise sentences and paragraphs (Kho-Yar & Ai Siok, 2015).

This descriptive survey and correlation type of quantitative research focused on the learner's autonomy and their preferred MI area and its effect on their grammar proficiency using the adopted instruments from other researchers. Based on the findings gathered in this study, learners tend to use more of their cognitive ability and social factors in autonomous learning. The majority of the learners are more inclined with existential and bodily kinesthetic intelligence and their grammar proficiency is at an advanced proficient level. Furthermore, learners' autonomy and their multiple intelligence significantly affects their grammar proficiency.

**Index Terms-** Multiple Intelligences, Grammar Proficiency, Learners Autonomy, Second Language

## I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, the education system focuses on learner autonomy and individualized education. Students are expected to be made aware of their strengths and weaknesses and be responsible for their own learning (Solmundardottir, 2008). It is therefore necessary for the teachers to use various methods that are appropriate and appealing. Hence, they should understand different ways on how learners acquire knowledge.  
Learners' Autonomy

For over three decades, learner autonomy has been a vital concept in the field of language learning (Al-Busaidi & Borg, 2012). Learners have to work inside and outside the classroom to develop their language skills. The notion of learner

independence or learner autonomy moves into an area where learners can direct their own learning. It could mean those learning activities which take place without the immediate intervention of the teacher (Najeeb, 2013)

A lot of studies about learner autonomy were conducted in terms of different viewpoints (Oracki & Gelisli, 2017) It has become one of the intriguing phenomena in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Joshi, K. (2011). According to İlknur (2009), autonomy is basically defined as taking the responsibility of an individual's own learning. Some literature relevant to autonomy shows that classroom-based approaches that aim to encourage autonomy are rooted from providing the learners the chances to make their own choices regarding the management of their own learning. Moreover, to develop language skills, learners have to work inside and outside the classroom. The concept of learner autonomy is generally about learners' independence and directing their own learning without the immediate intervention of their teacher Najeeb (2013).

Meanwhile, Morrison (2011) argued that support from lecturers or peers in language learners is needed in the learning process, because learner autonomy is not an experience of a learner on his own. Although it is defined by different aspects, the common trait is that learners should take charge of their learning and be responsible for the process of learning

#### Theory of Multiple Intelligence

As far as learners' skills are concerned, a theory has been very influential to the scholars and researchers in terms of understanding the development of each individual. Dr. Howard Gardner, professor of education at Harvard University, published *Frames of Mind* in 1983 where he discussed Multiple Intelligence Theory. He never expected MI theory to get a lot of attention in the field of education. Initially, he developed his ideas and theory on multiple intelligences as a contribution to psychology. However his theory was recognized by education, teaching and training communities as an established classic reference work and learning model to understand and teach many aspects of human intelligence, learning style, personality and behavior.

For Gardner, (1983), MI Theory focuses on the ability to solve problems or create products that are beneficial within one or more settings. However, recently, Gardner expanded his ideas of intelligence and made it clear as learners' psychological potential that provides them with an opportunity to process information (Zarei & Mohseni, 2012).

Different potentials were explored when Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory questioned the traditional notion of

intelligence. It provided new opportunities in the educational system in improving different learners' potentials. Learners should be aware of their own learning style because the task to increase the learners' motivation and improve academic results is a challenge for a teacher (Scott-Monkhouse, 2012).

Central intelligences were identified in MI Theory namely: linguistic is the ability to use words effectively orally or in writing; logical-mathematical is the ability to use and understand numbers effectively and to reason well; visual-spatial is the ability to use mental imagery for discerning orientation in space; bodily-kinesthetic is the ability to use physical body movements to express emotion and ideas; musical is the ability to perceive, transform, and express musical forms; interpersonal is the ability to perceive and make distinction in the moods, intentions, motivations and feelings of other people; intrapersonal is the ability to act adaptively on the basis of that knowledge and self-awareness; and naturalist is the ability to recognize and classify numerous species in the environment.

Gardner also explained the inclusion of "existential intelligence" which he suggests as the ninth one (Tien & Hanh, 2020). He emphasized that those who have a high existential intelligence have the capacity to ponder fundamental questions and the ability to see "the big picture" and to make connections between similar and dissimilar concepts (McCoog, 2010). It can also be defined as the ability to be sensitive to, or have the capacity to conceptualize and to discuss deeper or larger questions about the existence of humans, These individuals display the tendency to pose and ponder questions about life, death, and ultimate realities (Pearson, 2011).

However, an issue was raised in the article published in 2015 entitled, "Multiple Intelligence: A Widely Misunderstood Notion" where it made mention of Luistro's statement (2010) that it is not true that the Philippines in its new DepEd K+12 curriculum really accepted "Multiple Intelligences" as a theory of education.

According to Dekker (2012), "Multiple Intelligences" is still not supported by sound, consistent, and valid empirical proof, so it should not be taught and applied to the classroom without providing enough evidence that it can really help in enhancing students' learning. DepEd is therefore linking its new curriculum on something that is not based on evidence. This theory supports this study in a way that it will give light and help to bridge the existing gap among the inconsistent empirical evidence from previous studies related to the improvement of the grammar instruction.

#### Grammar Proficiency

According to Debata (2013), grammar has different meanings with different groups of people. For the ordinary citizens, it is the appropriateness of the language that they speak. To the students, it means an analytical and terminological study of sentences. It is also the study of words and the ways words are put together which serves as a guide in constructing sentences. In addition, some findings have shown that all educators consider grammar as a significant element in English as a Second Language (ESL) learning. It is necessary to be taught a system that helps language to work, a heart of language and a crucial element in language learning.

Grammar may be abruptly defined as manipulation and combination of words to create new meaning. How units of meaning may be formed in any language is governed by a set of rules. (Chung and Pullum, 2015). Specifically, English grammar involves eight parts of speech namely: noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, conjunctions, preposition, and interjections. These grammatical elements are being taught to the students for them to become competent (Sioco & De Vera, 2018). Furthermore, the rubrics of grammar, such as usage of auxiliary verbs, parts of speech, use of articles and word order for the expression complex tenses, aspect and mood, as well as passive construction conditional sentences are needed for those who want to master the language and to enhance their English proficiency level (Chandra, 2016).

Furthermore, Kirkham (2010) encapsulates grammar as the rules of language. Still, how these rules are conceptualized and confined can differ from definition to definition. Consequently, the traditional discernment of grammar differs in precise but vital ways from the linguistic sense of the term. For linguists, grammar is important because it is the language that makes it possible to talk about language, but for many language teachers and learners, the importance of grammar is associated with the accurate use of language for effective communication (Ahangari & Barghi, 2012). In addition, Richards (2016) explains that grammar is the system of rules applied to construct sentences which point out the knowledge of parts of speech, tenses, phrases, clauses and syntactic structures. It is utilized to create grammatically correct sentences in English.

Meanwhile, Chandra (2016) underscored that one who is fluent, proficient, and accurate in English has the ability to speak or to express the language with enough structural accuracy and vocabulary to engage successfully about practical, social, and professional topics in both formal and informal conversation.

This capacity can be gained by training, practice, and advancement to knowledge, skill, and competence. Hence, one who is knowledgeable in grammar is one who has mastered and can utilize these rules to express himself or herself in the acceptability of the language forms.

Grammar proficiency is an important aspect of any good writing composition. In addition, students can improve their English proficiency by producing written work that employs the grammatical structures they have learned. Although it is idealistic for nonnative students to expect to reach 100% accuracy, they should aim to continuously improve their writing proficiency, in order to make their work as readable and efficient as possible. (Baleghizadeh & Gordani, 2012)

As far as competence is concerned, one of the language learning competencies in the K to 12 program is connected with grammar proficiency. Evidently, the noticeable failure among students in their usage of correct grammar in English language can be seen both in the elementary and in the secondary level of education. The learners are expected to master grammar competencies in the early stages since K to 12 uses spiral progression which means that it is a prerequisite for them to handle the more advanced grammar lessons in the higher levels of their education (Sioco & De Vera, 2018).

Because Filipinos read, write, listen and speak English, they stood out from other ESL speaking countries. This may have been the situation a decade ago but it is no longer the same at

present. This state is reflected in the different studies and other related research about grammar proficiency of Filipino learners. In the study of Suarez, Añabieza, & Tagaytay (2016), with 400 participants, they found that the students from Davao had a low level of grammar proficiency of (2016). The same result was found in the study conducted by Sioco & De Vera (2018), they found that 90.4 percent of Filipino respondents have an "Average" grammatical competence in the area of subject-verb agreement, and only 9.6 percent have gained the level "Moving towards Mastery".

Furthermore, it supports the findings of Aboy & Manalo (2015) which revealed that the fourth year Filipino students had average level of grammar proficiency when they were taken as a whole was average in articles, nouns, pronouns, verbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections and was low in adjectives and adverbs. When grouped by variables, their level of grammar proficiency was consistently average.

Additionally, the English language proficiency of freshmen students who are enrolled in the Institute of Teacher Education is described as Early Intermediate. These students can only make simple sentences in communicating basic and familiar ideas and can read and write short paragraphs on familiar topics that have vocabulary and sentence structures taught previously. They usually commit errors in word usage, pronunciation, and grammar (Leyale, 2016).

#### Learners' Autonomy and Grammar Proficiency

In line with this, researchers explore advanced ESL learners' ability to make improvements in grammatical accuracy by autonomously noticing and correcting their own grammatical errors. In the recent literature in SLA, it is suggested that classroom tasks can be used to foster autonomous language learning habits. Therefore, it is important to consider classroom tasks that encourage autonomous language learning behavior. In the study of Vivkers (2016) 13 advanced ESL composition students were engaged in a task in which they compared their own use of grammatical form in their own written output to the use of grammatical form as used in a text written by a native speaker.

Meanwhile, some other studies related to learners autonomy and grammar proficiency found contradicting results. For example, Mangda (2015) found that the level of motivation and the English language Proficiency test of the students was not found significantly related which means that their desire to study English did not influence their proficiency test. Also, Ezzi (2018) also investigated students' level of learner autonomy and its relationship with their English proficiency. It was found that two variables are not significantly correlated which indicates that the high or low level of English proficiency of the students doesn't mean that their learner autonomy will be high or low as well.

Furthermore, Zarei & Nasrin, (2015) investigated the effect of EFL learners' proficiency level on their motivation and autonomy. 141 English major Iranian students participated in the study. To assess variables, they were asked to fill in two questionnaires on motivation and learner autonomy, Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) and an autonomy questionnaire developed by Zhang and Li (2004)(45). The participants' proficiency level was examined using their scores on the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency

(MTELP). The collected data were analyzed using the Kruskal-Wallis procedure. Findings revealed that the students' language proficiency did not influence their motivation and autonomy. Hence, language proficiency was not an influential factor in students' motivation and autonomy.

#### Theory of Multiple Intelligence and Grammar Proficiency

During the last three decades, multiple intelligence (MI), proposed by Gardner (1983), has drawn considerable attention from the researchers. The theory of MIs has always been a controversial view in language learning, and there have been many different views about the relationship between MIs and language learning (Zarei & Mohseni, 2012).

Gardner's view of intelligence can be seen as a starting point for teaching English in a way that is different from traditional, teacher centered methods making use of only linguistic intelligence-friendly activities. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (MI) proposes a means of understanding how we process, learn, and remember information. His theory asserts that while individuals are capable of processing information in at least eight different ways; each individual varies in the degree of skill possessed in each of these intelligences. He identifies eight categories of skills and abilities which he considers to be individual intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal and intrapersonal and naturalistic. He believes that these discrete abilities operate together in complex ways, and provide a much more comprehensive view of what constitutes human intelligence. Hence, MI Theory can be a means to address students' diverse intelligences by creating individualized learning environments. (Elgün-Gündüz & İsmail, 2016).

MI Theory has been one of the basis in language learning in the classroom for many researchers. One of these is the of Haley (2004) as cited by Derakhshan & Maryam (2015), where it was found that students achieved greater success rates when the MI theory was implemented. Moreover, the study of Mulyaningsih, Rais, & Sulistyawati (2012) verified the correlation between grammatical competence and verbal linguistic intelligence toward writing ability with 30 students as the sample. The data was analyzed using Linear Regression Analysis Statistics by using SPSS 16. Findings show that there is a positive correlation between grammatical competence and verbal linguistic intelligence toward writing ability. Hence, grammatical competence and verbal linguistic intelligence contribute to writing ability.

In addition, Sadeghi and Farzizadeh (2012) figured that the components of MI had a significant correlation with writing ability. After a year, another study from Salem's (2013) verified the effectiveness of MI based instruction on developing speaking skill of the pre-service teachers of English language classrooms. These results inferred that In the ESL and EFL classrooms, it is feasible to encourage learners through different activities related to different intelligences.

On the other hand, a number of related studies revealed results contrary to the findings of the above-mentioned systematic investigations. For instance, Sogutlu & Sogutlu (2018) found that there is a moderately significant negative relationship between bodily intelligence and interpersonal intelligence, and their success in grammar. Also, it was revealed that there is no relationship between students' success in grammar and their

linguistic, logical, spatial, musical, intrapersonal and naturalistic intelligences. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to investigate possible relationships between these variables. It was concluded that there was no relationship between overall MI and students' achievements in grammar, vocabulary and writing. The results also show that overall MI does not correlate with students' performance in grammar, vocabulary or writing. Whereas negative correlation was found between learners' bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence and interpersonal intelligence and their success in grammar. Finally, no relationship was detected between the other MI components and learners' success in vocabulary and writing. As Zarei & Mohseni (2012) examined the intelligence types that learners apply in connection to their ESL and EFL learning, it was concluded that no single teaching technique can best suit all types of learners since they will experience different success no matter how they are taught. However, in an effort to understand learner-centered instruction from the perspective of MI, Saricaoglu and Arikan (2009) emphasized that the purpose of second language teachers' action was to investigate the use of MI theory in designing instructional strategies, development of curricula, and alternative forms of assessment and evaluation with ESL learners.

## II. STUDIES AND FINDINGS

The following findings were revealed in the study.

### Learners' Autonomy

Learners' autonomy in terms of self-direction is "Mostly True" with the average mean score of 4.00.

Learners' autonomy in terms of independent work in language can be interpreted as "Mostly true" with an average mean score of 3.83.

learners' autonomy in terms of importance of class/teacher is "Mostly True" with a mean score of 3.64

Learners' autonomy in terms of role of teacher in explanation/supervision can be interpreted as "Mostly True" with the average mean of 4.22.

Learners' autonomy in terms of language learning activities outside the class is "Mostly True" with an average mean of 3.69

learners' autonomy in terms of selecting content is "Mostly True" with the average mean score of 3.56

the learners' autonomy in terms of intrinsic motivation is "Mostly True" with an average mean score of 4.00

learners' autonomy in terms of assessment/motivation is "Mostly True" with an average mean score of 3.63

learners' autonomy in terms of interest in other cultures is "Mostly True" with a mean score of 3.65.

### Objectives and Implication of the Study

According to Kostos( 2006) as cited by Songsiri in 2007, improving students' grammar accuracy is an essential factor in language learning. Thus, this study aims to develop understanding of the relationship among the learners' autonomy and multiple intelligence with grammar proficiency.

Although a number of implications have already been raised, the present study offered a platform for other research dimensions worthy of note. There is a need for more research linking learners' autonomy and multiple intelligences with their grammar proficiency that may contribute to the improvement of the teaching instruction of English. The result of the study might be of interest to the practitioners in planning and designing tasks in order to present the information in various ways, and to attend to the grammar proficiency of the learners. inception of ideas till their publications. Research papers are highly recognized in scholar fraternity and form a core part of PhD curriculum. Research scholars publish their research work in leading journals to complete their grades. In addition, the published research work also provides a big weight-age to get admissions in reputed varsity. Now, here we enlist the proven steps to publish the research paper in a journal.

Cognitive ability of the respondents which are the dimension 1 readiness for self-direction with 4.0 mean score and dimension 5 Language Learning Activities outside the class with 3.69 mean score has obtained an average mean of 3.84.

Affective factors including the dimension 8 assessment/motivation with a mean score of 3.63 and dimension 7 intrinsic motivation with a mean score of 4.0 has obtained an average mean score of 4.0.

Meta-cognitive strategies including dimension 2 independent work in language with a mean score of 3.83 and dimension 6 selecting content with a mean score of 3.56 has obtained an average mean of 3.70.

Finally, social factors which include dimension 3 importance of class/teachers with 3.64 , dimension 4 role of teacher:explanation/supervision with a mean score of 4.22, and dimension 9 interest in other cultures with a mean score of 3.65 has obtained an average mean of 3.84.

### 2. Intelligence of the Learners

Bodily kinesthetic has a mean score of 11.80; existential has 11.32 mean score ; interpersonal has 13.61 mean score; intrapersonal has 13.16 mean score; logic has 14.31 mean score; musical has 15.39 mean score; naturalistic has 17.35 mean score; verbal has 19.15 mean score; and visual has 17.89 mean score.

### 3. Grammar Proficiency of the Learners

Seven out of 379 respondents scored 61 to 75 which means 1.8 percent of them are highly proficient; 114 scored 46 to 60 which means 30.1 percent are advanced Proficient; 109 scored 36 to 45

which means 28.8 percent are proficient; 70 scored 26 to 35 which means 18.5 percent are emerging proficient; and 79 scored 1 to 25 which means 20.8 percent are below proficient.

#### 4. Relationship between Learners' Autonomy and Grammar Proficiency

Obtaining the p-value of 0.000 indicates a strong significant correlation between the learners' autonomy and grammar proficiency.

#### 5. Relationship between Learners' Intelligence and their Grammar Proficiency

Obtaining the p-value of 0.000 indicates a highly significant correlation between learners' multiple intelligences and their English Proficiency.

### III. GET PEER REVIEWED

### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings gathered in this study, the following conclusions were drawn.

Learners tend to use more of their cognitive ability and social factors in autonomous learning.

Majority of the learners is more inclined with existential and bodily kinesthetic intelligence

Learners' grammar proficiency is at an advanced proficient level.

Learners' Autonomy significantly affects their grammar proficiency which indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Learners' multiple intelligences significantly affects their English proficiency which also indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected.

Finally, this study suggests implications on the improvement of grammar instruction in relation to the application of learners' autonomy and Multiple Intelligence Theory inside and outside the classroom.

### APPENDIX

Appendixes, if needed, appear before the acknowledgment.

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