

Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence Among English Language Undergraduates at Sultan Qaboos University

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Abstract—Verbal-linguistic intelligence (VLI) is one of the multiple intelligences that encompasses the ability to use language effectively in various ways, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. University English courses are not limited to teaching grammar or vocabulary. Rather, it provides students with practical opportunities to use the language, think critically, and express their ideas confidently through discussions, presentations, writing assignments, and real-world communicative activities. This study aimed to identify the level of VLI among undergraduate English language students at Sultan Qaboos University, Oman. A convenience sample of 128 students responded to 28 items. The VLI scale corresponded to 4 subscales: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Although there were statistically significant differences in reading and writing skills in favor of students who have high GPAs, the results showed that the participants had a high level of VLI. No statistically significant differences were found by gender, college type, or educational level. The study recommended improving the language skills of all students through adopting various learning strategies that would boost their VLI, as well as supporting students with limited academic achievement.

Index Terms—Howard Gardner, language skills, Sultan Qaboos University, verbal-linguistic intelligence

I. INTRODUCTION

In the fields of psychology and education, researchers believe that intelligence is a human ability that allows individuals to emerge as thinkers, learners, and problem solvers (Colom et al., 2010; Hambrick et al., 2020; Sadiku et al., 2020). It includes a diverse set of energies and skills manifested in an individual's behavior and performance (Ritchhart, 2001; Al-Zoubi & Al-Adawi, 2019). One of the more prominent scholars who developed a comprehensive approach to intelligence was Howard Gardner (1983), who argued that intelligence represents a complex structure composed of many independent abilities. Each ability identifies a distinct form of intelligence. This means that there are different forms of intelligence that individuals can possess to varying degrees. Verbal Linguistic Intelligence (VLI) is one of those intelligences that attracted researchers' attention (Iqbal et al., 2025). As Walela (2024) posited, Gardner summarized VLI as the individual's ability to effectively and accurately use language to articulate ideas, communicate, persuade and motivate others, present information, deliver discourse, possess skills related to listening and speaking, maintain a comparable vocabulary, and foster a love for reading and storytelling. VLI could be considered one of the prominent foundations in the learning and communication process (Armstrong, 2003; Hajhashemi et al., 2013); it is closely linked to the development of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and speaking enhance the learner's deep understanding of new vocabulary use, grammatical rules, and pronunciation. Similarly, reading improves learners' vocabulary acquisition and demonstrates learners' VLI in analyzing and understanding texts. Writing typically encompasses these multiple language and cognitive skills. Learners' ability to construct ideas in clear and rich language is increased by the depth of linguistic experience and intelligence.

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Gardner suggested that some people may have an aptitude for linguistic proficiency; however, this natural capability does not necessarily ensure success in educational settings. Since this study focuses on students studying the English language, it posits that what makes students successful language learners is their cognitive ability to recognize and apply appropriate strategies and be aware of their linguistic strengths and weaknesses (Putri et al., 2024). As a result, students gifted with VLI become better equipped to set goals, monitor their progress, and adopt practical strategies such as using flashcards, engaging in peer discussions, or practicing authentic task-based activities to handle different language tasks (Hasanudin & Fitrianiingsih, 2020; Al-Amrani et al., 2025). Additionally, language intelligence (LI) also plays a crucial role in the learners' ability to acquire and produce language, as it involves sensitivity to sound patterns, reading, writing, and oral expression (Gardner, 1983; Armstrong, 2003; Armstrong, 2009). Thus, students with a high level of VLI tend to use language more effectively. They grasp meaning more easily, express their ideas more clearly, and make language acquisition more dynamic.

Even though English language programs in Oman are quite effective, students still face challenges when it comes to overall language proficiency (Al-Ruzaiqi & Hussain, 2025; Al-Amrani et al., 2025). According to the 2024 EF English Proficiency Index, Oman ranks 104th out of 116 countries, with an English proficiency score of 421 (EF Education First, 2024). From the perspective of VLI, students with higher levels of this type of intelligence are generally better at overcoming these challenges through finding practical ways to improve their learning skills. As a result, identifying and developing VLI among university students is important to enhance their academic and professional prospects.

Still, little research to date has directly examined the VLI of Omani university students. To address this gap and better understand how cultural and educational contexts may influence language-related cognitive abilities, this study focuses on undergraduate English language students at Sultan Qaboos University, aiming to generate insights that can inform language instruction, policy, and curriculum development. Students who study English as both a foreign language and an academic discipline are expected to develop a strong foundation in communication, critical thinking, and linguistic skills applicable to fields such as teaching, translation, and research. Thus, this study seeks to investigate VLI among students enrolled in English language programs at the Department of English and Translation and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Sultan Qaboos University.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Human intelligence has long fascinated psychologists and educators, as it reflects our ability to think, solve problems, and adapt to new situations. Traditionally, intelligence has been seen as a single, general ability measured by IQ tests. While these tests helped identify individual differences and predict academic performance (deLeyer-Tiarks et al., 2024; Gignac, 2024), they fell short in capturing the multiple dimensions of human intelligence, like creativity and social skills, to mention a couple. Researchers have acknowledged this limitation, and it has led them to consider how multiple brain systems related to cognitive processes seamlessly coordinate together. Acquiring cognitive skills like attention, memory, and information processing allows the individual to strengthen his/her cognitive capacities (Nyberg, 2025; Conway et al., 2021). Based on that, intelligence as a concept transcends what standard tests could measure, as it encompasses skills like creativity, emotional awareness, and social understanding.

Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences confirmed the aforementioned statement. His theory argued that intelligence is a collection of unique abilities, each of which is crucial in shaping the individual's learning and reasoning processes. Since VLI is one of these multiple intelligences, it is most significant in an academic context. Gardner (1983) asserted that VLI represents a vital dimension of human intelligence, especially in language acquisition. This intelligence goes beyond mastering grammar to include rhetorical skills, mnemonic techniques, literary analysis, and critical thinking. Students with high levels of VLI frequently comprehend complex texts, express their ideas clearly, engage in research, and utilize communication skills effectively in their future careers (Handayani et al., 2021; Morgan, 2021; Al-Amrani et al., 2025). Not surprisingly, VLI is a major predictor of success in language acquisition, like English language skills development (Iqbal et al., 2025); it enhances both receptive and productive skills, aiding mastery of vocabulary, idioms, and syntax (Lestari et al., 2025). University educators should recognize that students have different levels of VLI. Therefore, there is a need to conduct research that examines VLI among undergraduate English language students, design targeted learning strategies to improve language proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Gunawan et al., 2022), and examine their impact on students' academic success as well as the acquired skills needed for their future careers.

VLI surpasses the acquisition of simple language skills. It involves fluent reading and writing, a deep understanding of language (Georgieva, 2020), effective and smooth communication (Liu et al., 2025), the ability to grasp humor (Yuwana, 2024), and behavioral influence on others (Braca & Dondio, 2023). However, there are strategies that could be adopted by learners interested in developing their VLI. Armstrong (2009) proposed that learning strategies like brainstorming, storytelling, recording thoughts, and journal writing are useful ways to cultivate VLI. Brainstorming, for instance, could be a powerful tool for boosting critical thinking by challenging students to generate new ideas, while storytelling expands their knowledge and helps them improve their communication skills. Recording thoughts helps learners express and refine their ideas, along with developing their problem-solving skills. Finally, journal writings hone students' writing skills when they regularly take notes. A correlation between VLI and the four language skills of reading, speaking, listening, and writing has been established (Halil, 2017; Yuliyanto et al., 2020) as VLI supports students'

mastery of the four skills and makes the language learning process more effective and comprehensive. Still, reading, writing, and speaking have received much scholarly attention, while listening remains an underexplored area. This highlights a research gap in investigating the relationship between VLI and listening, which is important in comprehension and engagement.

Several studies have explored the impact of VLI on undergraduate English language students. Erlina et al. (2019) investigated the significance of VLI among EFL learners at an Indonesian Islamic university. Through a qualitative case study, they identified four key components of VLI in learners' behaviors: rhetoric, mnemonics, explanation, and metalinguistic awareness. However, only a small portion of students actively used language to persuade, recall, and analyze language structures. The study emphasized the need to incorporate strategies such as public speaking, summarization, and peer teaching to cultivate VLI in broader learner populations. In a Jordanian context, Al-Zoubi (2024) examined VLI among academically gifted students at Ajloun National University. The results revealed high levels of VLI, particularly among females and upper-level students. The findings proposed by Erlina et al. (2019) and Al-Zoubi (2024) indicated that VLI is an existing potential but is not actively demonstrated among the majority of the students in their respective sociocultural contexts.

While Maisyarah's (2016) study found no significant statistical correlation between VLI and reading skills among English majors, it suggested that educators should develop VLI-targeted strategies to improve students' reading comprehension. The findings in Maisyarah's (2016) study contrast with what Armstrong (2003), Naderi et al. (2009), and Rahmadina and Jufrizal (2021) proposed; they noted a strong correlation between VLI and EFL reading comprehension and stated that VLI has a positive impact on developing students' reading proficiencies and aids students in improving their usage of new vocabulary, syntax, and literary and contextual analysis. Cementing this connection, Hasanudin and Fitriyaningsih (2020) concluded that VLI is one of the predictors of reading performance.

In addition to reading, several studies identified a connection between VLI and speaking and writing. Ahmadian and Hosseini (2012) reinforced its impact on effective communication in both skills. Setyaningsih et al. (2022) investigated its impact on EFL speaking skills, pointing out that VLI should be complemented by other internal and external factors to improve learners' speaking skills. Mujiono (2023) and Lestari et al. (2025) found a strong connection between VLI and writing skills. Both studies revealed that students with high levels of VLI were found to be able to effectively articulate their ideas in writing. Ultimately, the aforementioned studies highlighted VLI's crucial role in enhancing EFL language skills.

To reflect on the Omani context, Al-Zoubi and Al-Adawi (2019) noted the significant impact of instructional activities based on multiple intelligences on boosting the academic achievement of Omani students with learning disabilities. These activities allowed the targeted learners to improve several skills, such as verbal linguistics and communication. In another study that investigated multiple intelligences among Omani EFL students, Al Hosni and Al-Manthari (2021) indicated that interpersonal, logical-mathematical, and visual-spatial intelligences were most prominent, while VLI, crucial for expressing and understanding ideas effectively, appeared less emphasized. This highlights that students with strong language skills may not always have sufficient opportunities to fully utilize their verbal-linguistic abilities. Similarly, Al Seyabi and A'Zaabi (2023) found a significant gap when they explored whether Omani English textbooks support students' multiple intelligences. Their investigation showed that textbooks prioritized visual and logical intelligences while giving less attention to developing students' VLI. This imbalance may hinder students who have excellent language skills from engaging properly in classroom activities.

A recent study conducted by Jomaa et al. (2025) found that EFL undergraduate students in Oman often utilize learning strategies to improve their vocabulary. The adopted strategies are metacognitive, which include planning and monitoring. These strategies underscore their connectedness with VLI and are more effective in improving students' language skills than memory-based techniques. On the other hand, the impact of one's native language on learning English is a double-edged sword, showcasing advantages and challenges. Vaishnav's (2025) study explored the impact of Arabic language and culture on Omani university students learning English. The findings indicated that students' sociolinguistic skills and the ability to use English effectively are shaped by the academic environment and their exposure to the language. However, students' native Arabic language was seen as a challenge to English language acquisition because of literal translation and awkward phrasing not used in English. These findings assert the importance of acquiring VLI skills among learners so that they can understand different cultural contexts, minimize language interference, and use English to communicate effectively.

In summary, the reviewed literature affirms the pivotal role of VLI in English language acquisition, especially within higher education contexts. As stated earlier, research established a significant impact of VLI on developing university students' language skills despite some structural limitations. In contrast, most research on multiple intelligences in the Omani context has focused on visual, logical, and social skills, while VLI has received little attention. This gap is particularly clear for Omani university students learning English, showing a need for studies that explore ways to strengthen language skills and design learning activities that help students communicate more confidently and clearly.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Significance and Questions

This study holds theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it contributes to the growing body of research linking Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences with academic performance in EFL contexts. VLI is widely acknowledged as critical for language mastery. Yet, few studies have examined its role within higher education institutions in the Arab world—particularly in Oman. Practically, the study provides valuable insights for language educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers. It aims to identify the VLI levels of undergraduate English language students and how these levels relate to academic achievement. However, the findings may inform the development of more effective instructional strategies. Understanding how gender and academic department influence VLI can support targeted interventions that enhance student outcomes and promote equitable language education in multilingual, multicultural learning environments. Based on that, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of VLI among undergraduate English language students at Sultan Qaboos University?
2. Does VLI differ according to the students' gender?
3. Does VLI differ according to the students' GPA?
4. Does VLI differ according to the students' class standing?
5. Does VLI differ according to the students' college (Arts vs. Education)?

B. Participants

A convenience sample of 128 undergraduate students participated in this study. The students were enrolled at the Department of English Language and Translation, College of Arts and Social Sciences, and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman. A total of 94 students were enrolled in the College of Education, while 34 were enrolled at the College of Arts and Social Sciences. The sample included an almost even representation of both genders, with 65 females and 63 males taking part in the study. Regarding the academic level, 110 participants were in their third year of university or above, while 18 students were in their second year or below. Moreover, 42 of the participants had a GPA of very good or above, whereas 86 participants had a GPA of good or below (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
DEMOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	63	49
	Female	65	51
Academic level	Second year or below	18	14
	Third year or above	110	86
GPA	Good or below	86	67
	Very good or above	42	33
College	College of Education	94	73
	College of Arts and Social Sciences	34	27

C. Instrument and Procedures

This study adopted a descriptive quantitative approach that seeks to identify VLI among undergraduate English language students. Data was collected through circulating a survey sent via email to all English language students enrolled at the above-mentioned departments. The VLI scale was developed after reviewing the philosophical foundations of VLI in the theory of multiple intelligences. The relevant literature and studies were also reviewed (Saeidi et al., 2019; Al-Zoubi, 2024; Hilmi et al., 2024; Toifah et al., 2025). The first version of the scale consisted of 36 items divided into four subscales: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The psychometric properties of the scale were verified. The VLI Scale was reviewed by seven faculty members from the Colleges of Education and Arts and Social Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University to ensure face validity. Consequently, the final version of the scale consisted of 28 items distributed equally across the subscales. VLI Scale items were answered on a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree - strongly disagree). On the other hand, the reliability of the scale was also verified by conducting a pilot study with a sample consisting of 35 undergraduate English language students at Sultan Qaboos University. This preliminary procedure aimed to ensure the clarity and comprehensibility of the items, as well as to assess their internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. The analysis of the scale's internal consistency showed that the reliability of the subscales was satisfactory. The reliability coefficients were Listening 0.85, Speaking 0.80, Reading 0.77, and Writing 0.80. These results indicated that the items within each subscale are well-aligned and work harmoniously, providing a reliable measure of VLI. To determine the level of VLI among the students and analyze the results, the mean scores of the scale were classified into three levels: low, average, and high, based on the range formula as follows: Low (1.00–2.33), Average (2.34–3.66), and High (3.67–5.00). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviation, and t-test) to summarize VLI level and to examine the relationships between VLI and gender, GPA, class standing, and college.

IV. RESULTS

The first research question aims to identify the level of Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence (VLI) among undergraduate English language students at Sultan Qaboos University. The means and standard deviations were calculated according to VLI subscales (see Table 2). The results shown in Table 2 and Figure 1 reveal that the level of VLI among undergraduate English language students was high across all four subscales—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As illustrated in the table and the figure, listening received the highest mean score ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.369$), followed closely by speaking ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.453$), writing ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.429$), and reading ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.382$), respectively.

TABLE 2
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS ACCORDING TO VLI SUBSCALES

Subscales	N	M	S.D	Level
Listening	128	4.04	.369	High
Speaking	128	4.03	.453	High
Writing	128	3.98	.429	High
Reading	128	3.95	.382	High

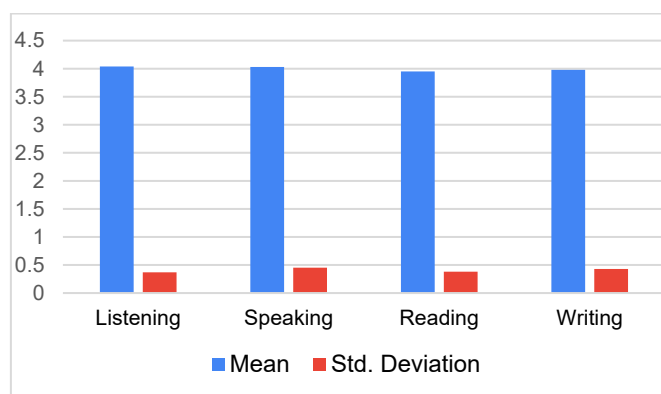


Figure 1. Means and Standard Deviations According to VLI Subscales

The second research question examines whether VLI differs according to the students' gender. Figure 2 shows the means and standard deviations according to the gender of the students. It indicates that there may be statistically significant differences in VLI subscales according to the students' gender. To identify these differences, the t-test was used, as shown in Table 3. The results reveal that there are no statistically significant differences in the scale subscales according to the students' gender.

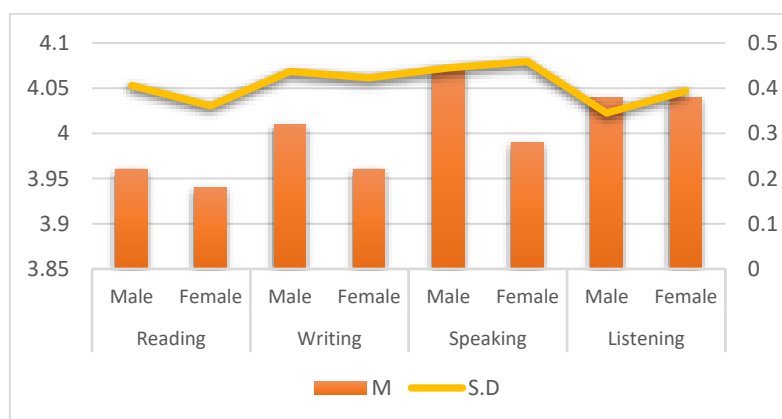


Figure 2. Means and Standard Deviations According to Students' Gender

TABLE 3
T-TEST RESULTS BY STUDENTS' GENDER

T-TEST RESULTS BY STUDENTS' GENDER							
Subscales	Gender	N	M	S.D	df	t	Sig.
Reading	Male	63	3.96	.406	126	.362	.718
	Female	65	3.94	.361			
Writing	Male	63	4.01	.437	126	.688	.493
	Female	65	3.96	.423			
Speaking	Male	63	4.07	.445	126	1.087	.279
	Female	65	3.99	.459			
Listening	Male	63	4.04	.345	126	.021	.983
	Female	65	4.04	.394			

The third question, “Does VLI differ according to the students’ GPA?” reveals that there may be statistically significant differences in VLI subscales according to the students’ GPA (see Figure 3). To identify these differences, the t-test was used. As presented in Table 4, there are statistically significant differences in the reading and writing domains between the two GPA groups. Students with a GPA of “Very Good & Above” scored significantly higher in reading ($M = 4.10$) and writing ($M = 4.14$) than those with a GPA of “Good & Less” ($M = 3.87$ and $M = 3.91$), respectively.

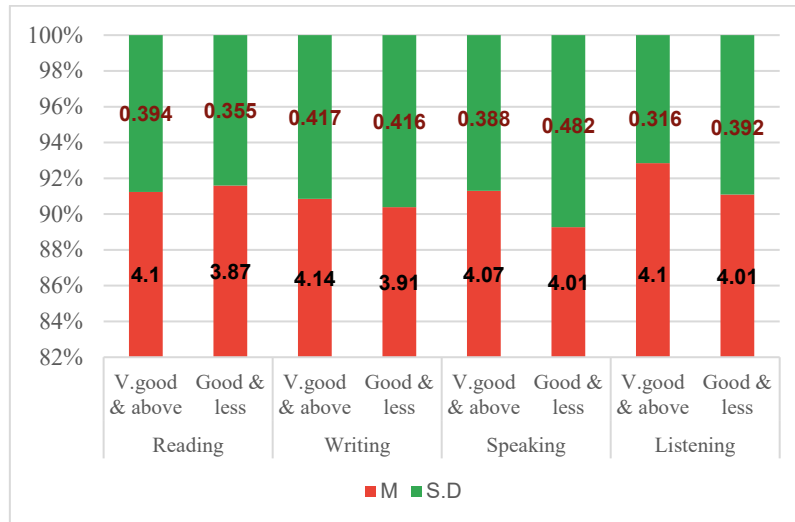


Figure 3. Means and Standard Deviations According to Students’ GPA

TABLE 4
T-TEST RESULTS BY RESPONDENTS’ GPA

Subscales	GPA	N	M	S.D	df	t	Sig.
Reading	V.good & above	42	4.10	.394	126	3.303	.001*
	Good & less	86	3.87	.355			
Writing	V.good & above	42	4.14	.417	126	3.026	.003*
	Good & less	86	3.91	.416			
Speaking	V.good & above	42	4.07	.388	126	.770	.443
	Good & less	86	4.01	.482			
Listening	V.good & above	42	4.10	.316	126	1.205	.230
	Good & less	86	4.01	.392			

The fourth question explores whether VLI differs according to the students’ class standing. Figure 4 suggests that there may be statistically significant differences in VLI subscales according to the class standing of the students. The t-test was used to identify these differences. Table 5 indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in VLI subscales according to the class standing of the students.

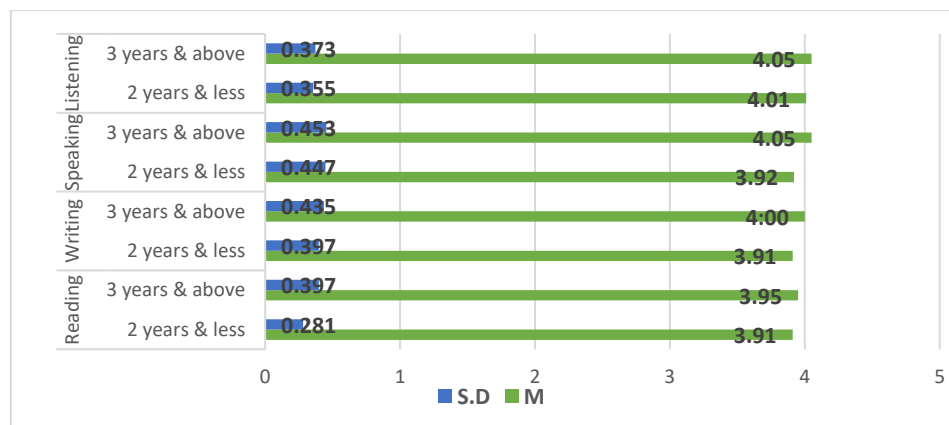


Figure 4. Means and Standard Deviations According to Students’ Class Standing

TABLE 5
T-TEST RESULTS BY RESPONDENTS' CLASS STANDING

Subscales	Class Standing	N	M	S.D	df	t	Sig.
Reading	2 years & less	18	3.91	.281	126	-.435	.665
	3 years & above	110	3.95	.397			
Writing	2 years & less	18	3.91	.397	126	-.824	.418
	3 years & above	110	4.00	.435			
Speaking	2 years & less	18	3.92	.447	126	-1.104	.272
	3 years & above	110	4.05	.453			
Listening	2 years & less	18	4.01	.355	126	-.383	.703
	3 years & above	110	4.05	.373			

Figure 5 suggests that the fifth research question, "Does VLI differ according to the students' college?" yields statistically significant differences in VLI subscales according to the students' college. To identify these differences, the t-test was used, as demonstrated in Table 6, which also shows that there are no statistically significant differences in VLI subscales according to the students' college.

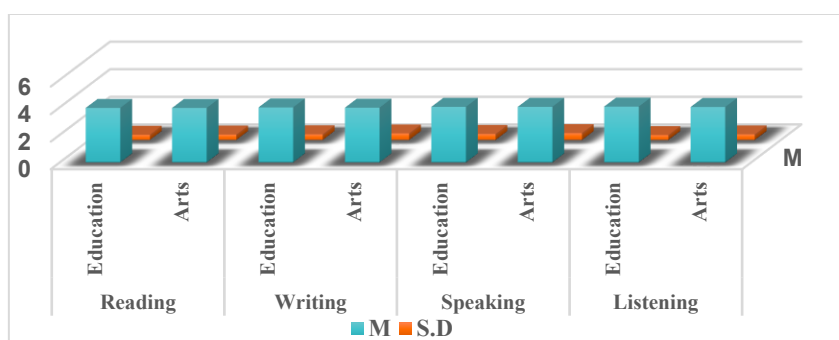


Figure 5. Means and Standard Deviations According to Students' College

TABLE 6
T-TEST RESULTS BY STUDENTS' COLLEGE

Subscales	College	N	M	S.D	df	t	Sig.
Reading	Education	94	3.95	.379	126	-.049	.961
	Arts	34	3.95	.396			
Writing	Education	94	3.99	.413	126	.294	.769
	Arts	34	3.97	.477			
Speaking	Education	94	4.03	.437	126	.013	.990
	Arts	34	4.03	.502			
Listening	Education	94	4.05	.356	126	.352	.726
	Arts	34	4.02	.409			

V. DISCUSSION

The results of this study revealed that undergraduate English language students at Sultan Qaboos University exhibit a high level of Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence (VLI). They align with the theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983), which positions VLI as one of the core dimensions of human intellectual potential in an academic setting. Thus, the study generally showed that participants possessed high linguistic intelligence abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These results were consistent with Al-Zoubi's (2024) findings, which reported high levels of VLI among learners in linguistically rich environments. Al-Zoubi (2024), in particular, emphasized the role of instructional strategies and cultural context in enhancing students' verbal skills. This observation was also mirrored in the Omani educational context (Al Amrani et al., 2025), where communicative and interactive teaching methods are prevalent. However, this finding does not align with that of Erlina et al. (2019), as a small portion of the study's population fully possessed these skills. This might indicate that the English programs at Sultan Qaboos University challenge students to develop their language skills and increase their VLI behaviors. Based on that, this study could present a claim that students with high levels of VLI not only have the natural aptitude for language, but they also manage to cultivate different skills that result from complex cognitive, cultural, and pedagogical factors. Sultan Qaboos University's specialized English programs, found in the College of Education and the College of Arts and Social Sciences, immerse students in a linguistically rich learning environment. The instructors guide students to use English effectively through implementing coursework activities that promote critical thinking and analytical skills. These activities activate the higher mental processes responsible for linguistic comprehension and verbal reasoning, which positively impact students' ability to express themselves accurately and generate ideas clearly.

The study's results further support the growing body of evidence proposed by Nafisa and Putro (2024) and Mujiono et al. (2019), which signals that rich, engaging academic learning environments stimulate students to develop VLI skills.

Therefore, Sultan Qaboos University students go beyond using language for basic communication; they utilize it as a tool for innovation and creativity, marking them as distinguished language learners. A key driver for developing VLI is the reliance on practice and active engagement. Erlina et al. (2019) and Toifah et al. (2025) noted that students who study linguistics develop their critical thinking and textual analysis skills that allow them to excel in reading, writing, and speaking. Based on this, it can be said that VLI among students studying the English language is not simply a linguistic talent with which an individual is born. Rather, it is the result of a stimulating educational environment, ongoing systematic training, and a rich linguistic culture, all of which contribute to the formation of a linguistic personality capable of understanding, expressing, and creating with distinction.

The study's finding aligns with a growing body of research that associates VLI with academic success in general. For instance, Al-Zoubi (2024) noted that learning approaches directed to gifted students develop their VLI and make them distinguished from other learners. The results also showed that there were statistically significant differences in reading and writing skills in favor of students with a GPA of very good or above. This finding may reflect that there is an association between higher academic achievement and stronger competencies in certain aspects of VLI, particularly reading and writing. As the results indicated, high-achieving students are typically more engaged in using the language, both in their studies and in their daily lives. The rich and up-to-date learning strategies implemented in Sultan Qaboos University's English programs also help explain why students with high levels of VLI excel in reading and writing skills. In this learning environment, students are placed at the center of the learning process. The adopted instructional design develops students' VLI through honing their ability to do research, critically examine texts, engage in discussions, and effectively deliver their ideas in speaking and in writing. Since most course requirements at the university rely on writing, reading analysis, and report preparation, writing and reading skills become more essential for achieving academic excellence than listening or speaking skills. Hence, it seems logical that students with high VLI ability to read comprehension and write are more successful in this academic system, as the active learning environment gives them ample space to utilize these abilities. Based on Mujiono et al. (2019) and Mujiono (2023), what develops students' VLI are learning activities that focus on enhancing students' writing and reading skills as well as classroom engagement, while Nafisa and Putro (2024) revealed that there is a strong connection between VLI and effective academic writing, underscoring how constant practicing activities impact this type of intelligence. On the other hand, the argument made by Aljohani (2022) and Al Amrani et al. (2025) illustrated that students develop their VLI through practice and active engagement rather than relying on memorization and other traditional learning approaches. In essence, developing students' reading and writing skills goes beyond classroom activities; it is a strategy that helps them hone their VLI to excel in their academic performance, especially among students enrolled in English majors (Naderi et al., 2009; Setyaningsih et al., 2022; Mujiono et al., 2019; Lestrai et al., 2025). Therefore, Sultan Qaboos University students' high academic achievement is a direct outcome of their engagement in active learning strategies implemented in Sultan Qaboos University's educational environment, which also promotes authentic task-based activities. Yet, students who struggle to achieve higher scores face challenges in using language effectively and/or clearly expressing their thoughts verbally or in writing, which affects their VLI skill development. This could also explain why there are no significant statistical differences in listening and speaking skills. Unlike reading and writing skills, which can be easily assessed and practiced in an academic setting, oral fluency and listening skills are influenced by authentic experiences that GPA does not always account for.

Beyond demographics, the study reveals that the participants' VLI was not influenced by their gender, academic year, or college, demonstrating that constant practice and personal experience develop students' VLI rather than these factors. When learners shift the focus from memorization to constant language practice of reading, writing, analyzing, and engaging in discussions, they develop their way of thinking and manage to express themselves in English effectively. Consequently, the more a student interacts with and consciously uses language, the higher their VLI and their ability to express ideas and engage with course materials.

VLI develops through practice and experience, not by relying solely on memorization or theoretical knowledge. Students who actively and effectively engage with language may develop stronger VLI skills, which enhance their ability to express themselves, analyze, and think critically. This, in turn, is reflected in academic performance and excellence in the English language major, aligning with the findings in Iqbal et al. (2025). Students with higher levels of linguistic intelligence were found to communicate more effectively and achieve superior academic performance. Therefore, developing linguistic intelligence improves the overall learning experience, making it richer and more engaging. Consequently, students who cultivate this form of intelligence have better opportunities to excel in reading, writing, and linguistic analysis, which is reflected positively in their academic outcomes. Moreover, this finding reinforces what Wallentin (2009) suggests: that no differences in language proficiency were found among female and male respondents. It also supports Armstrong's (2009) assertion that VLI develops through culturally meaningful interactions and is not strictly limited by formal education duration or institutional type.

Overall, the study provides empirical support for the integration of VLI considerations into university instruction. Recognizing and nurturing VLI, particularly in EFL and humanities disciplines, can help align teaching methods with students' cognitive strengths, ultimately enhancing their motivation, engagement, and academic performance.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that VLI represents a key cognitive asset among Omani university students, especially those specializing in English. The consistently high levels observed across participants reflect a strong alignment between learners' verbal linguistic strengths and the academic environment, which appears conducive to fostering language-related competencies. These findings contribute to the broader literature on multiple intelligences and second language acquisition in Omani higher education. They also offer practical implications for educators and curriculum developers in Oman, emphasizing the importance of fostering VLI to enhance student engagement, academic performance, and professional readiness. In summary, integrating VLI strategies into classroom instruction can support more personalized and effective learning experiences. Future studies may benefit from exploring the long-term impact of such pedagogical adaptations on academic achievement, language identity, and learner motivation, particularly within multilingual and multicultural higher education.

This research is limited to undergraduate students enrolled in English language programs at Sultan Qaboos University. This self-reported data may include biases and may affect generalizability. Therefore, findings may not be representative of other departments or institutions. Additionally, the study focuses solely on VLI along with its correlation with the four language skills, potentially excluding other cognitive and environmental factors influencing academic performance in language learning settings.

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