

The Use of Multiple Intelligences Theory in TEFL

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Abstract

The theory of multiple intelligence (MI) was proposed by Howard Gardener in the early 1983. It posits that there are various kinds of human beings intelligence and each person possesses eight intelligences includes (linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, naturalistic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence).

This theory has an important role in education and all teachers have to understand the MI among students so as to develop lessons to each kind. MI is essential in TFL because learners will learn according to their strengths and potentials and they can even develop their less developed area; moreover, it can build learners' self-confidence which is important in learning the language. The problem of this research is that the educational systems focus on logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligences and neglect the other types of intelligences. This may due to the difficulty and barriers faced by teachers in implementing other types of MI. MI theory proposes that students of different kinds of intelligences should have equal opportunities in learning and teachers should present their lessons in different ways to accommodate different intelligences in the classroom.

The study displays many ways and activities in which teachers can implement MI theory in the classroom. The aims are to explore the EFL instructors' perceptions about facing difficulties in implementing MI, and to identify the barriers in implementing this theory in teaching. The population of the study represents EFL instructors at Mustansiriyah and Baghdad Universities. The researcher used an online written interview for the first aim and adopted an objective questionnaire which matches the second aim of the study. As a result, it is noticeable that EFL instructors believe that MI theory is difficult to be implemented and that there are many barriers that hindered teachers from applying MI in teaching like the external pressure imposed on

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instructors by faculty, insufficient time, and the limitations in the pedagogical knowledge about MI theory.

Finally, the researcher recommends that EFL instructors need to identify students' MI profile so as to adopt various MI activities in teaching which match their strengths, and for syllabus designer to review the syllabus to be in harmony with MI theory.

Key words: Multiple Intelligence Theory, TEFL, Use.

List of Abbreviations

MIMultiple Intelligences

EFLEnglish as a Foreign Language

TEFLTeaching English as a Foreign Language

IQIntelligence Quotient

Section One: Introduction

1.1 The Problem of the Study

The multiple intelligences (MI) theory was originally proposed by psychologist Howard Gardner in 1983. He restricted eight kinds of MI: linguistics, logical- mathematics, visual-spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical, bodily-kinesthetic and naturalist (Marenus, 2000).

Gardner (1983) argues that the abilities and potentials of human are clear and direct evidence that multiple intelligences really exist, and these intelligences can be totally utilized either individually or combined. MI theory can be applied to schools and families, providing teaching methods good sense of creativity and new techniques and models to the teaching process (Ibid).

Lunenburg & Lunenburg (2014) state that the educational systems build on that all learners can learn the same subject in the same way and adapting a restricted uniform measure to test all learners. He ensures that these systems are widely biased toward linguistics intelligence first and second towards mathematical intelligence whereas not all learners have equally strong linguistic and mathematic intelligences. Botelho(2003) explains that learners should learn according to their preference and strength intelligence and they even can develop their less developed intelligence while learning ,i.e.,

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teachers can assist learners to explore their intelligences and build self-confidence.

Gardner criticizes the traditional intelligence evaluation as well as the materials and teaching techniques used in schools. He claims that schools should take the difference between individuals into consideration and give students enough opportunities to express themselves, placing equal attention and reassurance on those who show strengths in any kind of the eight intelligences. Thus, the students should be valued as individuals and teachers should supply them with appropriate learning experiences to match their different intelligences and to stimulate the development of multiple intelligences (Taaseh et al, 2014). So, students will be recognized and assessed according to their strongest intelligence and they will develop less strong intelligences in a non-threatening way. Armstrong (2007:33) adds that the weak intelligence may become a strong intelligence if the learner is given an opportunity to develop it and he ensures that the "Sensitivity to individual differences is a key to being a competent teacher who can optimize students' learning".

In Iraq, it is obvious that our educational system is heavily biased toward linguistic modes of instruction and assessment and then to mathematical modalities whereas there should be an equal attention to students' strength intelligences, moreover, teachers may have good knowledge about MI theory, but still the application faced difficulties and obstacles.

1.2 The Aims

The study aims at

- 1-exploring the EFL instructors' perceptions about the difficulties of implementing MI in TEFL.
- 2-identifying the main barriers in the implementations of MI in TEFL .

1.2 The Hypothesis

The study hypothesizes that

- 1-EFL college instructors do not believe in difficulties in implementing MI theory in teaching.
- 2- there are no barriers in the application of MI in TEFL.

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1.3 The Limits

The study is limited to Iraqi EFL college instructors in the university of Baghdad; College of Arts, College of Education for Women and university of Mustansiryah; College of Basic Education, College of Arts , during the academic year 2019-2020.

1.4 The Definitions of Basic Terms

1.4.1 MI Theory

Davis et al(2017)define MI theory as a theory which developed by Gardner in the early 1980. It proposed that individuals possess eight kinds of intelligences and they are linguistics intelligence, logical- mathematical intelligence, visual intelligence, musical intelligence, body intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, naturalistic intelligence.

Marens(2020) declares that the theory of MI supposed that "everyone has all eight intelligences at varying degrees of proficiency".

1.4.2 TEFL

TEFL could be defined as" the teaching of English to people whose first language is not English, especially people from a country where English is not spoken. TEFL is an abbreviation of teaching English as a foreign language"(Collins English Dictionary:2020)

1.4.3 Use

Use means "to carry out a purpose or action by means of :UTILIZE" (Merriam-Webster:2020) or " to put something such as a tool, skill, or building to a particular purpose" (Cambridge Dictionary:2020).

Section Two: Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Background of MI

Traditionally, intelligence has been viewed as "intelligence quotient (IQ), which measures only linguistics and mathematics intelligences (Christison & Kennedy, 1999). Thus, the material was taught to the all students by the same way without considering the individual differences. Gardner defines intelligence as a "bio psychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (Gardner, 2000:28).

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MI is a theory, which was proposed by Gardner in 1983, who believes that there are multiple human intelligences that must be addressed and developed in education. Moreover, he criticizes the IQ test as measuring only the logic and language. He challenges the idea that there is one type of intelligence known as "g" for general intelligence which focuses on the cognitive abilities. Thus, he ensures that the human brain has other important intelligences. Gardner argues that each person possesses eight distinct intelligences and that learners differ in their strength of the intelligences. And he regards MI theory as a contribution to cognitive science which contradicts with the view that intelligence is a unique ability for solving problems (Richards & Rodgers, 2000:115).

MI theory asserts that: (1) Everyone has unique combination of all eight intelligences; (2) Most people can develop intelligences to full competent levels if they are supplemented by encouragement and instruction ; (3) People who have high level of intelligences usually operate and interact in various complicated ways; (4) Each intelligence can be showed by multiple ways(Gardner,1999:57).

The eight intelligences are:

Linguistic Intelligence - it refers to the ability to use language creatively and to express the self. The learners have developed the auditory skills and think in words. They usually like reading, writing stories or poetry, playing word games. This intelligence could be developed by encouraging the learners to say words or to read books (Lane: 2000).

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence - : it refers to the ability to think reason and calculate rationally. The learners can think logically and critically and able to see and detect patterns and relationships. They like to do experiment, solve problems, and ask questions (Ibid).

Visual-Spatial Intelligence - it indicates the ability to form and perceive mental models of the world. Learners like to draw, read maps, and do jigsaw puzzles. It can be foster by using drawings, charts, graphics, multimedia, pictures and many others (Lunenburg & Lunenburg, 2014).

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Musical Intelligence - the persons have good ear for music and show sensitivity to rhythm, tone, and sound. They probably study better with music in the background. They can be taught by "turning lessons into lyrics, speaking rhythmically, and tapping out time". Tools implemented are CD, radio, musical instruments, music (Ibid).

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence - : it means using the body effectively, like a dancer, actor, or dancer to express feeling or thoughts. Learners like physical movement, making things, and touching. They communicate well using body language and can be taught through physical skills like speed, strength, and flexibility (Amstrong, 2009:7).

Intrapersonal Intelligence - it refers to the learner capacity to understand and appreciate oneself, i.e., feeling, fears, and motivation. These independent learners tend to work alone. They can be taught by independent study making use of tools like diaries, books, creative materials and etc. (Ibid)

Interpersonal Intelligence - it refers to the ability to interact, understand, and work with others. These learners learn through cooperation and interaction. They have lots of friends, and show empathy with others. The best ways for learning are through group works, seminars, and chats making use of tools like the phone, e mail, and conferences (Fuini & Gray, 2000).

Naturalist Intelligence - it shows the ability to understand the world and organize the patterns of nature. It indicates the recognition and classification of various species in the environment. Value is placed on these individuals who can distinguish species which are harmful or beneficial to the human beings(Gardner, 1999:48).

There are other intelligences which have been proposed like "emotional, mechanical, practical" intelligences.(Richards & Rodgers,2000:116).

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2.2 The principles of MI theory

MI theory based on the following principles:

1-Human beings possess and have capacities in all eight kinds of intelligences (Armstrong, 2009:3).

2- All kinds of MI could be developed if there is a wise encouragement instruction, i.e., they could be changed and grown in response to the biological and environmental factors (Krechevsky & Seidel, 1998: 87).

3- In MI theory, intelligence does not exist in isolation from other intelligences rather they interact together in complex ways (Gardener, 1999:55). Moreover, people make use of different combinations of intelligences while performing daily routines, for instance, when they drive cars, this requires the use of combination of MI like bodily, interpersonal, visual, and logical intelligences, i.e., it is crucial to develop the dominant and less dominant intelligence since daily activities required to the use of a variety of combinations of MI (Tele, 2000).

2.3 Integrating MI in TFL Classroom

Teaching according to MI theory required from the teacher to teach the material in various activities to stimulate and activate wide range of intelligences. For example, they encourage collaborative and individual work to match intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences (Lunenburg & Lunenburg: 2014). The MI theory enhanced learning by engaging many students' multiple intelligences in learning. So, "in addition to reading, writing, computing, and listening, students may learn through images, textures, rhythm, color, movement, sculpting, painting, designing, singing, model making, and role playing"(Chan :2000).

However, students should know their own strengths and Weaknesses to be able to use their cognitive capacities consciously, Therefore, students should be aware about their multiple intelligences and recognize their strong and less developed kind of MI to improve it. Each student should have a unique profile of his/her multiple intelligences; teachers should use different activities and approaches to match MI and to supply students with more chances to learn depending on their strengths (Ibid).

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MI theory is a good tool to enhance language learning by providing learners with multi-attractive ways of practicing language by the way giving the learners opportunities to learn not to a specific kind of intelligence, but on their preferred intelligences.

Rockwood (2003) believes that MI teaching involves the following: 1- Comprehension: The teachers should diagnose his/ her strongest intelligences as well as for the students

2-Application: The teacher should utilize his/her dominant intelligence to help students in learning and to encourage their strengths.

3-Stimulation: The teacher should always stimulate and promote students' dominant intelligences.

There are some components of MI teaching: "(1) Critical thinking; (2) Passion and enthusiasm for the surrounding; (3) Courage to try new things; (4) Creativity and skills; (5) Generosity and tolerance; (6) Keen observations"(Xie & Lin, 2009:108).

Seefchak(2008) clarifies that teachers should first recognize their own dominant intelligence before adopting MI in teaching, and employ their dominant it in planning materials , activities ,and lesson plans. They should examine students' performance by observing and writing records in order to assess their MI progress. So, teachers should present clearly the lesson's subject matter and make use of interesting and practical material to enrich and reinforce the learning process. Finally, none can say about MI theory whether it is right or wrong, the main idea is to understand students' strengths and to adopt the best and useful method for teaching students.

There are many ways to integrate MI in teaching language. Bas (2008) supposes that MI theory proposes eight ways for teaching and learning. So, teachers should be having the knowledge to the apply MI theory, and to provide a variety of activities to tap students' potential intelligences like:

1-Words Are Not Enough

Teachers should make use of movement and involve many senses not merely depending on the spoken words

2-Telling Jokes in the Class

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Telling jokes created by students will let students practice the language and encourage thinking.

3-Play with the Language

Let the students play with the language by singing a song or telling stories.

4-Cooperation not Competition

MI emphasizes cooperation not competition. So, teachers should encourage group work and sharing information, and experiences and avoid rewards .

5-Drawing and Colouring

Drawing the characters and creating maps could be used to decorate certain area by students.

6-Drama

Let students act out a story or song which they have read or listened to.

7-Games

Teachers make use of games to create an interesting atmosphere and develop students' proficiency like crosswords and card games.

8-Simulations

Simulation gives students chances to experiment the real world activities

9-Simulation software.

Teachers can activate students by making use of CD.

10-Learning Centers

Teachers may assign learning areas in the classroom called " learning stations" equipped with the required material to accomplish the projects or the activities .

11-Debating.

Students should be encouraged to think, debate, and discuss topics.

2.4 The Importance of MI

Hoerr (2000) demonstrates that the importance of MI in education is:

- "(1) Highlighting uniqueness of each student.
- (2) Bring out the students' dominant intelligences.
- (3) Dominant intelligence helps learning.
- (4) Variety of learning experiences.
- (5) Multiple intelligences teaching.
- (6) Variety of assessment methods.

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(7) Variety of means of expression. "

Section Three: Methodology

The population of the research includes EFL college instructors at Al-Mustansiriyah University, and Baghdad University during the academic year 2019-2020.

The sample of the research consists of 41 EFL college instructors distributed as follows: 21 instructors from the College of Basic Education, Mustansiriyah University; 3 from the College of Arts, Al-Mustansiriyah University; 9 from the College of Education for Women, Baghdad University; and 8 from the College of Arts, Baghdad University.

An online written interview used to enhance the first aim, which is exploring the EFL instructors' perceptions about the difficulties of implementing of MI in TEFL .It consists of only one question. To achieve the second aim, which is identifying the obstacles and barriers faced by instructors in implementing MI theory in TEFL, the researcher adopted an objective questionnaire which matches this aim. It consists of 6 themes as obstacles on the implementation of the MI theory in the EFL classrooms (Kaya & Ebenezer: 2006). Both items of the two tools were designed to be answered according to a two-point rating scale: agree and disagree (see Appendix 1 &2).Both has been administered to 41 EFL college instructors who answer them electronically in the 12th of June 2020. The questionnaires' items were assigned as follows; agree 2 marks; and disagree 1 mark. The percentage and Fisher's formula are used to analyze the results.

Section Four: The Results and Interpretations:

4.1 Presentation of the Results:

To achieve the aims mentioned above, Fisher formula is used to figure out the weighted mean of the items and compare it to the theoretical mean (1.5). It is noticed from table 3 that the unique item is highly stand as an agreeable perception in the difficulty of implementing MI theory as its weighted means is higher than the theoretical mean which is 1.5 .

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Table 3 The Frequencies, Weighted Means , Percentile Means of the EFL Instructors' perceptions and familiarity of the implementation of MI theory

Item. No.	Scale		Weighted Mean	Percentile Means
	Agree	Disagree		
1	25	16	1.609	80.45

Concerning the second aim, the items are arranged descendantly according to their rank. It is remarkable that all items being represented as real barriers in implementing MI theory as their weighted means are higher than the theoretical mean 1.5(see Table 4).

Table 4 The Frequencies, Weighted Means, Percentile Means and Rank Order of the barriers Faced by EFL Instructors

Rank	Item. No.	Scale		Weighted Mean	Percentile Means
		Agree	Disagree		
1	1	36	5	1.878	93.9
2	4	35	6	1.853	92.65
3	5	34	7	1.829	91.45
4	6	33	8	1.78	89
5	2	30	11	1.731	86.55
6	3	29	12	1.707	85.35

4.2 Interpretation of the Result

The results showed that EFL instructors think that MI theory is difficult to be implemented in teaching. Moreover, they had serious problems in implementing MI theory starting from the pressures imposed on teacher by faculty by sticking to the syllabus, then the followed system of assessment which concentrates on just one or two type of intelligence; linguistic and mathematic intelligences. There are also serious concerns about the students' progress in the subject matter being taught and problems about finding sufficient time for implementing MI activities. In addition, instructors' pedagogical repertoire about MI activities is limited and they face difficulties in managing MI activities.

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Section Five: Conclusion, Recommendations, and suggestions

5.1 Conclusions

According to results showed above, it is apparent that EFL instructors believe that it is difficult to implement MI theory in Iraqi Universities and this due to many reasons; like they are highly banded to the syllabus and time restriction and the implementation of MI theory required making use of various activities; like debate, games, group work, songs, storytelling, jokes, etc., in each lecture which demand first; time for planning, managing, and applying ,second pedagogical knowledge about the MI activities , third identifying students' MI profile to assign appropriate activities for each type of intelligence.

Consequently, it is very important for instructors to understand MI theory and its bases , principles , and activities because it could be the rescue for teaching / learning process by creating an interesting atmosphere and help the students to learn effectively and avoid the focus on just one intelligence .

5.2 Recommendations

In the light of the research findings; the researcher recommends the following:

- 1- It is beneficial for college instructors to utilize MI theory in TEFL.
- 2-There is a need for college instructors to identify students' MI profile in order to implement a variety of activities that match their strengths.
- 3-It is important for syllabus designers to review syllabus to be in harmony with MI theory.
- 4-Conducting workshops for staff members to make them acquainted with the activities and the benefits of MI.

5.3 Suggestions

Inspiring from the research findings, the following researches are suggested:

- 1-A research to examine students' motivation and attitudes towards implementing MI theory in classes.
- 2- An experimental study to examine the effect of MI on communicative competence and linguistic competence.
- 3- A study to explore the relation between MI and achievement in different subjects.

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4- A study to investigate the effect of MI with combination of chosen teaching method on the students' achievement.

5- A similar study can be held on primary or intermediate teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 A Questionnaire of the EFL instructors' perception and familiarity of the implementations of MI in TEFL

No.	Item	Agree	Disagree
1	Do you think the implementation of MI theory is difficult?		

Appendix 2 A Questionnaire of the Barriers Faced by EFL Instructors in Implementing MI Theory

No.	Item	Agree	Disagree
1	External pressures imposed upon teachers by faculty		
2	The central assessment system		
3	Concerns about students' progress through the subject		
4	Problems of finding time for MI activities		
5	Limitations in teachers pedagogical repertoires about MI activities		
6	Difficulties of managing the MI activities		

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□ استخدام نظرية الذكاء المتعدد بتدريس اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية

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المستخلص:

اقترح هورد كاردرنر نظرية الذكاء المتعدد في بداية عام 1983 والتي تفترض بانه هناك انواع مختلفة من الذكاء البشري وكل شخص يمتلك ثمانية انواع من الذكاء وهي (اللغوي، المنطقي، الرياضي، البصري، الموسيقي، الجسدي، الحركي، الطبيعي، الشخصي، الاجتماعي). لهذه النظرية دور فعال في التربية وعلى كل من المعلمين و التربويين فهم الذكاء المتعدد للطلبة لكي تؤخذ بعين الاعتبار عند التدريس ولهذه النظرية دور اساسي في تدريس اللغة الانكليزية لان المتعلمين سوف يتعلمون تبعا لنوع الذكاء الفعال لديهم و حتى من الممكن تطوير الذكاء الاقل فعالية بالإضافة الى بناء الثقة بالنفس لدى الطلبة المهمة في تعلم اللغة.

مشكلة البحث تتلخص بانه الانظمة التربوية تركز على الذكاء المنطقي واللغوي وتهمل الانواع الاخرى من الذكاء وهذا ربما يعود الى الصعوبة والعوائق التي يواجهها المعلم في تطبيق انواع اخرى من الذكاء المتعدد. تفترض نظرية الذكاء المتعدد بانه في التعلم يجب اعطاء فرص متكافئة للطلبة اصحاب انواع الذكاء الاخرى وعلى المعلم في الصف عرض المادة بطرق مختلفة لكي يستوعب انواع الذكاء الاخرى.

تستعرض الدراسة العديد من الطرق والفعاليات التي من الممكن للمعلم استخدامها لتطبيق نظرية الذكاء المتعدد في الصف. كما وتهدف الدراسة الى اكتشاف رؤى الاساتذة المدرسين للغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية حول صعوبة تطبيق نظرية الذكاء المتعدد، والى تحديد العوائق التي تواجههم في تطبيقها في التدريس. يمثل مجتمع الدراسة الاساتذة المدرسين للغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية في الجامعة المستنصرية وجامعة بغداد. استخدم الباحث مقابلة الكترونية مكتوبة لتحقيق الهدف الاول وتبنى استبيان موضوعي والذي يتوافق مع الهدف الثاني للدراسة. كنتيجة تبين ان الاساتذة يعتقدون بصعوبة تطبيق نظرية الذكاء المتعدد وبان هناك العديد من الموانع التي تعيق تطبيقها مثل الضغط الخارجي المؤسساتي، ضيق الوقت، و محدودية المعرفة التربوية لتطبيق النظرية.

اخيرا، اوصى الباحث بضرورة تشخيص الذكاء المتعدد للطلبة وتبني فعاليات صفية متنوعة والتي تتوافق مع نقاط القوة لديهم وكما اوصى مصممي المناهج بمراجعة المناهج لتكون متوافقة مع نظرية الذكاء المتعدد.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: نظرية الذكاء المتعدد، اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية، استخدام