



Maximizing Learning Potential: Integrating Multiple Intelligences Theory In EFL Teaching And Learning

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received- 02-02-2024. Accepted: 15-03- 2024	This study delves into the significance of adopting a Multiple Intelligence (MI) approach in teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language (LEFL). Acknowledging the diverse cognitive capacities among students emphasizes that traditional lecture techniques may not suffice. Drawing from Gardner's seminal work on multiple intelligences, which posits nine distinct types of intelligence, this paper scrutinizes the effects of MI on LEFL and the correlation between MI and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). By reviewing various studies, it highlights how different intelligences influence language learning skills. The paper underscores the intertwined relationship between MI, LEFL, and TEFL, advocating for the integration of diverse instructional strategies to cater to the unique learning styles of students. The topic is important as it provides insights into how language learning tasks can be designed to cater to the diverse learning styles of learners, making language learning more effective and engaging.
	Keywords: Keywords: Multiple Intelligence (MI), motivation, Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Learning English as a Foreign Language (LEFL)

INTRODUCTION

In the language classroom, educators have a wealth of stimuli at their disposal to implement a Multiple Intelligences (MI) approach to learning. The application of the multiple intelligences theory in language learning acknowledges that learners possess various strengths and aptitudes. By utilizing a diverse range of activities that tap into these different intelligences, this approach ensures a more comprehensive and engaging language acquisition process. Unlike traditional views that perceive language learning as solely cognitive, this approach adopts a holistic perspective, emphasizing the involvement of multiple intelligences. Kezar (2001) argued that all learners have different strengths and limitations. Some students struggle to grasp basic concepts and skills, whereas others may find it less demanding and easy.

Bruner's (1983) exploration into why children often struggle with school learning revealed a crucial insight: they perceive it as disconnected from their everyday experiences. Central to his theory of learning is the constructivist perspective, wherein the learner is regarded as an active participant in the process, actively engaging with information to construct knowledge that is meaningful and relevant to their understanding of the world. As language teachers, we must be aware of this issue so all students can join the learning process well (Kahn, 2014). In this model, the child is not a passive recipient of knowledge but rather an agent who retains, selects, and transforms information based on their individual perspective and interpretation of the world around them. This approach highlights the importance of integrating learning experiences with real-life contexts to enhance understanding and foster meaningful learning outcomes (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Senturk & Bas, 2010).

Moreover, the incorporation of multiple intelligences in language learning has profound implications for educational performance. Santos (2020) points out some foreign language teaching methods that had different objectives, such as learning grammar through translation, working on reading, and writing with questionnaires, developing orality through structural exercises, and learning through videos. It shifts students' perceptions of intelligence and academic achievement within the learning environment. Rather than adhering to a narrow definition of intelligence centered solely around linguistic and logical-mathematical abilities, the recognition of multiple intelligences allows for a broader understanding of individual strengths and

capabilities. This, in turn, can lead to increased motivation, enhanced learning experiences, and improved academic outcomes in the realm of language learning.

In today's educational landscape, there is a pronounced shift towards individualized education and learner autonomy. This paradigm emphasizes the importance of students taking ownership of their learning journey and being cognizant of their strengths and weaknesses (Ibmian & Hadban, 2013). Teachers have long recognized the diversity of strengths among their students, particularly in the realm of language teaching, where differences in learning or cognitive styles are often attributed to individual students. Factors such as aptitude, introversion, extroversion, motivation, empathy, anxiety, self-confidence, self-regulation, and inhibition play significant roles in shaping the pace and ease of second language acquisition (Haley, 2004). These cognitive and affective factors vary among individuals, contributing to discrepancies in language learning success. Hence, acknowledging and accommodating these individual differences is essential for fostering effective language learning environments and promoting learner success.

Bas and Beyhan (2010) presented findings based on their study of using Multiple Intelligences theory in learning English. They determined that MI-based learning is more effective in terms of student achievement levels and their attitudes toward learning. Their research supports Gardner's assertion that MI-based learning will serve students well. Hatch (1974) differentiated between learners as either data gatherers, who exhibit fluency but inaccuracy, or rule-formers, who prioritize accuracy yet often speak haltingly. This distinction highlights varying approaches to language learning, with data gatherers emphasizing fluency over precision and rule formers prioritizing accuracy despite potential hesitancy in speech.

Hani Morgan (2014) supports Gardner's theory, stating that in greater detail, the theory proposes that "we are all able to know the world through language, logical-mathematical analysis, spatial representation, musical thinking, the use of the body to solve problems or to make things, an understanding of other individuals and an understanding of ourselves. Where individuals differ is in the strength of these intelligences and how such intelligences are invoked and combined to conduct different tasks, solve diverse problems, and progress in various domains."

Anning (1991) underscores the uniqueness of children in their learning experiences, emphasizing that while each child brings individual characteristics to the learning environment, they often employ similar learning strategies. This recognition necessitates a nuanced understanding of learners as individuals with diverse learning styles and intelligence profiles (Dunn, 2000; Gardner, 1993, 1999). Consequently, educators must tailor their teaching approaches to accommodate these individual differences, paying close attention to classroom organization and adapting instructional methods to suit the varied needs and preferences of their students. By incorporating considerations of learning styles and intelligence profiles into classroom practices, teachers can create more inclusive and effective learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of their students.

HOWARD GARDNER'S THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE (MI)

Dr. Howard Gardner, a distinguished Professor of Education at Harvard University, introduced the Theory of Multiple Intelligences in 1983, fundamentally altering the understanding of human intelligence. His seminal work, "Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences," challenged the conventional notion of intelligence as measured solely by IQ tests. Gardner argued that intelligence is far more multifaceted and dynamic, encompassing a spectrum of eight distinct intelligences. Gardner's theory revolutionized the field of psychology and education by proposing a pluralistic view of the mind, recognizing diverse styles of cognition and cognitive strengths in individuals. Rather than assessing intelligence based on a single measure, Gardner emphasized the importance of understanding how intelligence operates uniquely in everyone. His theory not only broadened the definition of intelligence but also underscored the significance of nurturing and capitalizing on individuals' diverse intelligence to promote effective learning and development. Thus, Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences has had a profound impact on educational practices and continues to shape our understanding of human cognition and potential.

Gardner claims that all human beings have multiple intelligences. These multiple intelligences can be nurtured and strengthened or ignored and weakened. His research from 1991 identified seven intelligences; in the intervening time, Gardner (1999) identified nine intelligence types: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, and existential. In his book *Frames of Mind* (1983), Gardner described the first seven intelligence types, and in *Intelligence Reframed*, he added the last two (1999). The following are descriptions of each intelligence. These descriptions are based on many different sources (Alilateh, A., & Widyantoro, 2019; Christison, 1996; Leasa et al., 2017; Gkonou & Mercer, 2017; Sholiah et al., 2020; Taaseh et al., 2014)

- **Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence:** Well-developed verbal skills and sensitivity to the sounds, meanings, and rhythms of words.
- **Mathematical-Logical Intelligence:** The ability to think conceptually and abstractly, and the capacity to discern logical or numerical patterns.
- **Musical Intelligence:** The ability to produce and appreciate rhythm, pitch, and timbre.
- **Visual-Spatial Intelligence:** The capacity to think in images and pictures, to visualize accurately and abstractly.

- **Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence:** The ability to control one's body movements and to handle objects skillfully.
- **Interpersonal Intelligence:** The capacity to detect and respond appropriately to the moods, motivations, and desires of others.
- **Intrapersonal Intelligence:** The capacity to be self-aware and in tune with feelings, values, beliefs, and thinking processes.
- **Naturalist Intelligence:** The ability to recognize and categorize plants, animals, and other objects in nature.

While all people possess some level of intelligence, most will experience more dominant intelligence that impacts the way they learn and interact with the world around them.

Multiple- Intelligences in the (LEFL) Classroom:

Richards and Rodgers (2001) acknowledge that while the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) has been widely explored in general education, its application in language teaching is relatively recent. Consequently, MI theory may currently lack some fundamental elements that directly link it to language education. Despite this, specialists in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) have conducted studies to explore the implications of various psychological theories in education, including MI theory. By focusing on problem-solving activities that draw on multiple intelligences, these teaching strategies encourage learners to build on existing strengths and knowledge to learn new content and skills (Kallenbach, 1999).

These studies aim to bridge the gap between MI theory and language teaching practices, identifying ways to effectively incorporate MI principles into language instruction to cater to the diverse strengths and learning styles of students. Through ongoing research and experimentation, educators continue to explore the potential of MI theory to enrich language teaching methodologies and enhance student engagement and proficiency in language learning. A curriculum informed by MI theory provides a way of handling differing language skill levels within one class very common situation in adult ESL classes (Costanzo & Paxton, 1999).

Christison (1999) outlined four ways in which the Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory can be effectively utilized in the classroom:

1. **As a tool to help students develop a better understanding and appreciation of their strengths and learning preferences:** MI theory serves as a tool to assist students in recognizing and valuing their strengths and preferred learning styles, fostering a deeper understanding of themselves as learners.
2. **As a tool to develop a better understanding of learners' intelligences:** Educators can use MI theory to gain insights into the diverse intelligences present among their students, allowing for a better understanding of their cognitive strengths and preferences.
3. **As a guide to provide a greater variety of ways for students to learn and to demonstrate their learning:** MI theory guides educators in providing a broader array of learning opportunities that cater to the diverse intelligences of students, facilitating engagement and comprehension across multiple pathways of learning.
4. **As a guide to developing lesson plans that address the full range of learner needs:** By incorporating MI principles into lesson planning, educators can ensure that instructional strategies address the full spectrum of learners' needs, promoting inclusivity and maximizing learning outcomes for all students.

These approaches demonstrate how MI theory can be effectively applied in the classroom to create a more student-centered and inclusive learning environment. Howard Gardner answers questions in his book, *A Synthesizing Mind*, an intellectual memoir. He reflects on his intellectual development and his groundbreaking work on the theory of multiple intelligences. Throughout his career, Gardner has focused on human minds in general, or on the minds of creators and leaders. Reflecting on his own mind, he concludes that he is a "synthesizing mind" with the ability to survey experiences and data across a wide range of disciplines and perspectives.

The MI theory and TEFL:

Christison (1996, 2005) and Armstrong (1995) provide examples of activities that fit each type of intelligence. These examples illustrate how various learning activities can be tailored to different intelligences according to Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences:

1. **Verbal/Linguistic:** Cater to linguistic learners by incorporating activities such as note-taking, writing assignments, storytelling, and debates. Encourage students to express themselves verbally and engage in discussions to deepen understanding. According to Armstrong (2000), activities and assignments that can promote linguistic intelligence include reading and analyzing literature, writing essays or creative stories, engaging in debates or discussions, and playing word games such as Scrabble or crossword puzzles. These tasks allow individuals to develop their language skills, enhance their ability to express ideas effectively and deepen their understanding of language structure and function.
2. **Logical/Mathematical:** Engage students with puzzles, games, and logical problem-solving tasks that require sequential thinking and categorization. Individuals with high Logical-Mathematical Intelligence excel in using numbers effectively and possess a keen sensitivity to logical patterns and relationships. They enjoy experimentation, questioning, and solving logical puzzles, often demonstrating a unique aptitude for

identifying connections, categorizing information, and sequencing tasks. These learners thrive in problem-solving situations, applying logic to calculate mathematical problems efficiently, and prefer structured environments where information is organized logically.

3. **Musical/Rhythmic:** Integrate music, singing, and rhythm into lessons to appeal to auditory learners. The development of musical intelligence in the EFL classroom offers benefits including improved concentration, inner self connection, and stimulation of creative processes. Research by Wood (cited in Campbell, 1997) and Lozanov (1988) indicates that students exposed to musical education or classical/baroque music often achieve higher academic results. Additionally, studies by Rauscher, Shaw, and Ky (1997) suggest that music can enhance learners' spatial-temporal intelligence, further emphasizing the positive impact of music in the classroom.
4. **Visual/Spatial:** Utilize visual aids such as charts, graphs, and videos to facilitate understanding. Encourage drawing and visualization activities to enhance spatial reasoning skills. Individuals with high Visual-Spatial Intelligence demonstrate proficiency in recognizing shapes, patterns, and colors, as well as understanding the spatial relationships between objects, including distance and direction. They possess a vivid imagination and the ability to visualize and manipulate mental images. These individuals excel in remembering images, faces, and intricate details, and they often use their visual-spatial skills to creatively modify and recreate their environment based on their perceptions and experiences.
5. **Body/Kinesthetic:** Incorporate hands-on activities, field trips, and physical exercises to appeal to kinesthetic learners. Use role-playing and pantomime to reinforce concepts through bodily movement. "Kinesthetic" originates from the term "Kinesthesia," which pertains to the sense of movement and awareness of bodily changes in momentum, balance, position, and stillness. As described by Armstrong (2004), individuals with high kinesthetic intelligence excel in physical activities such as sports and role-plays, and they typically prefer learning experiences that involve movement. These individuals enjoy activities like acting, dancing, and building things, favoring hands-on learning and tangible experiences. They possess strong motor skills, are attuned to their bodies, and learn best through movement and hands-on experimentation.
6. **Interpersonal:** Foster collaboration and social interaction through pair work, group projects, and cooperative problem-solving activities. Encourage students to learn from each other and share ideas in a supportive environment. Interpersonal intelligence encompasses the capacity to comprehend and engage with others effectively, involving adept verbal and nonverbal communication skills, the ability to distinguish among individuals, and sensitivity to their emotions and temperaments. Individuals with interpersonal intelligence possess a keen awareness of the mood, characteristics, emotions, and intentions of those around them, enabling them to tailor their interactions accordingly. They excel in forming connections, understanding others' perspectives, and adapting their communication style to foster meaningful relationships and collaborations.
7. **Intrapersonal:** Provide opportunities for self-reflection and personal goal-setting through activities such as journaling or self-evaluation exercises. Allow for autonomy in learning by providing options for independent study or homework assignments. Individuals with high Intrapersonal Intelligence, as described by Armstrong (2000), possess deep self-awareness and a comprehensive understanding of themselves. They demonstrate insight into their strengths, weaknesses, motivations, desires, and intentions. Proficient in setting goals, planning, and reflecting on their experiences, they excel in self-directed work and prefer solitary endeavors. These individuals thrive in environments where they can explore their inner thoughts and feelings, leveraging their introspective abilities to navigate their personal and professional lives effectively.
8. **Naturalist:** Tap into students' interest in the natural world by incorporating activities such as collecting specimens, learning about flora and fauna, and exploring environmental concepts. Encourage observation and classification skills through hands-on exploration of nature. Individuals with high Naturalist Intelligence exhibit a profound understanding and appreciation of the flora and fauna within their environment. They are often drawn to activities such as playing with pets, gardening, and exploring nature. Possessing a deep curiosity about living organisms and the Earth, they excel in observing, categorizing, classifying, and comprehending the complexities of the natural world. This intelligence reflects their ability to connect with and understand the intricate relationships present in nature, as well as their commitment to caring for the Earth and its inhabitants.

By offering a variety of learning experiences that align with different intelligences, educators can create inclusive and engaging environments that cater to the diverse strengths and preferences of all learners.

Multiple Intelligences and Teachers

Gunst (2004) conducted research examining the application of Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory in the classroom, focusing on teachers' own intelligences. He argued that educators are tasked with catering to the diverse interests, strengths, and needs of students, yet traditional schooling often emphasizes verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences disproportionately. Gunst advocated for creating equitable learning opportunities by designing activities that target students' various intelligences. His study revealed a correlation between teachers' strongest intelligence and the instructional strategies they employed. Specifically, most

teachers who reported implementing MI theory in their classrooms tended to utilize strategies aligned with their dominant intelligence, as highlighted by Dolati and Tahiri (2017).

This finding underscores the influence of teachers' own intelligences on their instructional practices. Given that language teachers are individuals with unique cognitive profiles, their strengths in particular intelligences may shape the types of activities they prioritize in the classroom. As such, understanding teachers' cognitive strengths can offer insights into their instructional preferences and approaches. However, it's essential to recognize that effective language teaching requires a balance of diverse instructional strategies that cater to the varied intelligences of students, ensuring an inclusive and comprehensive learning experience.

Research by Serin et al. (2009) indicates a significant correlation between instructors' multiple intelligences and the teaching strategies they employ. Armstrong (2018) suggests that teachers can leverage technological resources to supplement their instructional efforts when necessary. While Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory is not prescriptive, it offers educators a conceptual framework for designing classroom curricula and diversifying their teaching strategies. By understanding their own and their students' intelligences, teachers can tailor their instructional approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles and preferences, fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment. As advocated by Campbell (1997), MI theory serves as a valuable tool for educators to expand their pedagogical repertoire and enhance student engagement and achievement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature reviewed indicates the potential for designing language learning tasks to engage learners across various types of intelligences, as proposed by Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Leveraging advanced technologies and empirical validation of tailored interventions are crucial steps toward enhancing language learning experiences and outcomes for diverse learners. Overall, the literature on Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences highlights its relevance and potential impact on education, providing valuable insights into the diverse nature of human intelligence and its implications for teaching and learning. Effective language learning tasks that engage learners across multiple intelligences can lead to improved language learning outcomes.

It would not be feasible to include skills in all activities, but even if students feel considered during them, even once a week, it will very likely increase satisfaction and better performance in classes. It enables teachers to organize a variety of contexts that offer learners a variety of ways to engage meaning and strengthen memory pathways; it is a teacher-friendly tool for lesson planning that can increase the attractiveness of language learning tasks and therefore create favorable motivational conditions. Recognizing and promoting multiple intelligences among children fosters an inclusive learning environment that celebrates the diversity of their abilities. By acknowledging that each child has their unique strengths and areas for growth, educators can create opportunities for students to develop and excel in various domains. Embracing multiple intelligences not only enriches the teaching-learning process but also equips students with the skills and adaptability needed to navigate an increasingly diverse and dynamic world. Through this holistic approach to education, students are empowered to reach their full potential and thrive as well-rounded individuals capable of contributing meaningfully to society.

In the second language classroom, motivation can be enhanced by employing tasks aligned with various intelligences outlined by Gardner (1999). By offering a diverse range of language activities that stimulate different cognitive pathways, educators can foster sustained deep learning among learners. This approach accommodates diverse learning styles and promotes meaningful engagement, ultimately enriching the language acquisition process. The objective is not to teach specific intelligence or to correlate intelligence with specific activities, but rather to allow learners to employ their preferred ways of processing and communicating new information (Coustan & Rocka, 1999). This holistic approach caters to individual strengths and preferences, fostering inclusive and enriching language learning experiences for all students.

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