

*In the Name
of God*



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Department of English language and Literature

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in

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Entitled

**The Relationship between
Multiple Intelligences and Language Learning Strategies**

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September, 2014



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Master of Arts in English Language Teaching (ELT)

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Dedicated

To my precious treasures...

To my God, first and foremost, I would like to give honor and praise to my God. I know it was by His grace. So all thanks belong to my God.

To my dear family, especially, to my dear parents, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, for their understanding and encouragement of my pursuit of studies, for having instilled in me the value of education, for being my guide and inspiration throughout my life. I thank them for their faith in me. To my dear sister Sahar and my dear brother Ali. In addition to my parents, I am so thankful for having my sister and my brother in my life. Their love and support has also been a great contribution to the completion of my study.

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>According to the theory of multiple intelligences (MI) propounded by Gardner (1983, 1999), each individual has a multitude of intelligences that are quite independent of each other and each individual has a unique cognitive profile. Having access to the MI profiles and learning strategies of learners could help the teachers in planning activities to connect strategies and students' talents and provide students with the best possible instruction.</p> <p>This study set out with the aim of assessing whether MI profiles of Iranian students would show any relationship with their use of LLS as two important determining factors in the language learning. Additionally, this study explored the role of gender and different proficiency levels on EFL learners' multiple intelligences. Moreover, this study intended to determine the role of gender and different proficiency levels related to EFL learners' use of language learning strategies. A total number of 303 EFL learners, 164 males and 139 females participated in this study, 112 were Elementary, 92 were Intermediate students and 99 were advanced level, within the age range of 12 to 33 at Jahade Daneshgahi of Tabriz. The instruments used to elicit information for this study were MIDAS and the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Questionnaire provided in the Appendix section. Initially, to homogenize the English proficiency of the participants, <i>Nelson</i> English Language Tests were administered. Then, Pearson Product Moment correlation was used between Multiple Intelligences (MI) scores and Language Learning strategies. The correlation coefficient showed a significant relationship between the variables of MI and SILL. To further analyze the data, a Two-way MANNOVA was run between the MI scores and different proficiency levels and gender. The results of Multivariate tests showed a significant difference between the MI scores and different proficiency levels. The results of multivariate tests revealed there was no significant difference</p>	

in MI scores in different genders. In sum, there was no significant difference in interaction of the Multivariate tests of MI scores between different proficiency levels and gender. The results of analysis of univariate test indicated that there was a significant difference in musical intelligence of participants at different proficiency levels. The results of LSD pairwise comparison test showed that compared with the other groups, the elementary level acquired statistically the highest musical intelligence. Additionally, two-way ANOVA was first run followed by two-way MANNOVA to see whether any relationship existed between language learning strategies and different proficiency levels and gender. The analysis of two-way ANOVA revealed that the use of total strategies (LLS) at different proficiency levels was not significant. There was no significant difference in total strategies (LLS) and gender. The results of two-way MANNOVA showed that there was a relationship between use of language learning strategies and different proficiency levels and gender.

There are a number of important pedagogical implications for teachers and learners regarding teaching experience, syllabus design and curriculum development. The findings of the present study may serve as recommendations to educators to modify the instruction and offer the variety of opportunities for learners in EFL classrooms. They might help educators select a variety of appropriate teaching materials to meet the needs of learners with different abilities. Therefore, before choosing any teaching materials, educators should conduct needs analysis and test in order to find out the MI profile of the students and to avoid having any mismatch between selected topics and the students' needs.

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List of Abbreviations

MI: Multiple Intelligences

MIT: Multiple Intelligences Theory

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

IQ: Intelligence Quotient

LLSs: Language Learning Strategies

CLS: Cognitive Learning Strategies

MLS: Metacognitive Learning Strategies

SILL: Strategy Inventory of Language Learning

B.A.: Bachelor of Arts

M.A.: Master of Arts

TEFL: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

OPT: Oxford Placement Test

IL: Information literacy

Ph.D: Doctor of Philosophy

ELT: English Language Teaching

IEP: Intensive English Program

IBQ: Individual Background Questionnaire

CPM: Creative Personality Measurement Questionnaire

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

FL: Foreign Language

EPA: English for Academic Purposes

MIDAS: Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scales

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0. Introduction

In this chapter, a brief background of the study will be provided. Next, statement of the problem and purpose of the study will be touched upon. Then, the significance of the study will be presented. After that the research questions and hypotheses will be stated and the key words will be defined. At the end of the chapter, organization of the study in addition to the summary of the chapter will be provided.

1.1. Background of Study

‘Good language learner’ studies in the 1970s gave birth to a learner-centered pedagogy in language instruction. Since then learner variables have received increasing attention in language studies. One major variable that has seized the attention of scholars in recent years is intelligence type. The growing corpus of literature in the area of multiple intelligences continues to capture attention; there is as yet little solid knowledge concerning the interrelationship of intelligence profile and strategy use. Language learning strategies (LLSs) are another group of variables the effects and role of which have been the focus of many studies to date.

Individual differences can lead to different performances in many aspects, including learning an L2. Cognitive psychologists and educators have long been eager to understand individual differences in cognition and their effect(s) on learning and instruction (Altun & Kakan, 2006).

In the area of teaching and learning a second/foreign language, there has been an increasing interest in changing the focus from the teacher-centered classroom to the learner-centered classroom by shifting the focus from the product-orientedness to the process-orientedness of language learning. In this view, the learners are considered as active participants and the effects of teaching will be partly dependent on what they know such as their prior knowledge, what they think about during learning and their active cognitive processes. Also, this has brought attention to learning strategies which an individual learner applies during the learning process to facilitate second language learning. That is, how learners process new information and the kinds of strategies they use to learn, understand, or remember have been the major concern of the second or foreign language researchers.

1.2. Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

The concept of Multiple Intelligences was presented by Howard Gardner in 1983, though using multiple intelligences theory seems to be new in the horizons of psychology and

education. It is worth mentioning that intelligence is an elusive concept with diverse definitions. Considering the fact that terminologies of intelligent, brilliant, slow or dull are well-known concepts used by teachers or parents in classifying the children, it is assumed that the concept of intelligence is not something weird or complicated. In effect, every person has an intuitive understanding of the concept of intelligence, and this issue makes many challenges and difficulties in defining intelligence. Gardner argued for about eight types of intelligences each person possesses; its extent differs in any person, i.e. linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. Recently multiple intelligences theory attracted the attention of many researchers in education-related contexts in order to enhance teaching and learning a foreign language especially English. Individual differences have secured an important position in debates related to teaching/learning. L2 learners with distinct individual differences can employ strategies differently. Thus, it can be beneficial to recognize the individual factors that facilitate L2 learners' strategy use, given that the link between language learning strategy use and language achievement is strong (O'Mally & Chamot, 1990). A major problem in EFL classes is that learners' individual differences are not usually taken into consideration in language instruction. In the Iranian EFL context in particular, various capabilities and preferences of learners are not duly taken into account. Drawing on the theory of Multiple Intelligences, the study tried to find out whether IQ indices have any relationship with the learners' use of language learning strategies. This study attempted to investigate the role of gender and language proficiency in the EFL learners' MI profiles. In so doing, it examined the extent to which gender and L2 proficiency can contribute to the use of LLS.

1.3. Significance of and Justifications for the Study

Investigating the use of language learning strategies and intelligence type of EFL learners will allow us to make more informed decisions concerning how they should be dealt with in language classes. Such studies will make the planning stage more flexible to incorporate the learners' characteristics into consideration prior to the implementation stage. There is a need to increase our understanding of how the perceived use of LLSs is related to one's intelligence type in an EFL context. As such, we will be able to tailor our strategy instruction to various learners in order to enhance the quality and effectiveness of instruction.

Currently, the growing interest toward language learning, particularly English, has made the factors that could affect the learning effectiveness more important. Many factors influence the second/foreign language learning process. However, one of the most important

elements for SLA research to explain is the specific strengths and weaknesses that individuals carry with them in their second/foreign languages. Thus, knowing more about the influence of multiple intelligences on ESL/EFL learning is becoming more important.

Teachers have usually seen the students who come to the classroom with different sets of developed intelligences. Thus, there is a need to deal with different students with varying strengths. It may sound impossible to cater for all the different needs of these differing students. However, this is possible if the teacher centers the lesson around the nine intelligences. By encompassing all the nine intelligences, these students will benefit from their different levels of intelligences. Gardner (1987, p. 187-193) claimed that “teachers should recognize and nurture all the varied human intelligences, and all the combinations of intelligences”. Lazear (1992) also acknowledged that teachers can show students how to use their more developed intelligences to assist in the understanding of a subject which normally employs their weaker intelligences. The MI theory encourages teachers to acknowledge that all students have strengths and that each individual is unique. Thus, teachers should take into account different intelligences of the students and prepare student-centered activities that apply all the students’ intelligences. Students experience success in learning by this way. Kagan and Kagan (1998) stated that students recognize their own pattern of intelligences and that of their classmates. Students come to celebrate their own uniqueness and honor the diversity they discover among themselves. Thus, recognizing the students’ intelligences and learning in a conducive environment are vital for effective learning to take place.

Lazear (1991, 1992) regarded MI theory as a solid platform based on which the learners’ needs, learning strategies, and intelligence models could be studied. He further asserted that the emphasis should not be strictly placed on logical-mathematical and verbal-linguistic intelligences. Thus, the present study wants to investigate quantitatively the relationship between learning strategies and MI scores of Iranian EFL students.

There is no doubt that learning strategies are important in the process of learning a foreign or second language; hence, learning strategies along with the multiple intelligences should be emphasized. Considering the fact that learning strategies are considered as crucial elements in success or failure of language learners and by paying attention to the fact that multiple intelligences have bilateral relationships, the present study endeavored to shed some light on blurred issues in multiple intelligences and their relationship with learning strategies.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were three-fold. The major objective of the study was to shed light on the role of language learning strategies and its relationship to intelligence type in Jahade Daneshgahi English Language Institute in Tabriz, Iran. This study was inspired by Gardner's MIT and the possible role that this theory can play in explaining the successful L2 learners' use of language learning strategies. In other words, the study aimed at determining how students at Jahade Daneshgahi English Language Institute in Tabriz as a specific setting where the study was carried out employed language learning strategies and how it related to their intelligence types. Furthermore, the present study was an attempt to explore the role of gender and different proficiency levels across various intelligence types. In addition, the role of gender and different proficiency levels related to EFL learners' perceived use of language learning strategies were taken into consideration.

1.5. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The present study intended to investigate the question of whether there was any probable relationship between the use of language learning strategies by L2 learners and the construct of MI. More specifically, the following research questions and hypotheses were addressed:

Research Question one: Is there any relationship between EFL learners' Multiple Intelligences (MI) scores and their use of different language learning strategies?

Null Hypothesis One: There is no relationship between EFL learners' Multiple Intelligences (MI) scores and their use of different language learning strategies.

Alternative Hypothesis One: There is a relationship between EFL learners' Multiple Intelligences (MI) scores and their use of different language learning strategies.

Research Question Two: Is there any relationship between EFL learners' Multiple Intelligences (MI) scores and different proficiency levels and gender?

Null Hypothesis Two: There is no relationship between EFL learners' Multiple Intelligences (MI) scores and different proficiency levels and gender.

Alternative Hypothesis Two: There is a relationship between EFL learners' Multiple Intelligences (MI) scores and different proficiency levels and gender.

Research Question Three: Is there any relationship between EFL learners' language learning strategies and different proficiency levels and gender?

Null Hypothesis Three: There is no relationship between EFL learners' language learning strategies and different proficiency levels and gender.

Alternative Hypothesis Three: There is a relationship between EFL learners' language learning strategies and different proficiency levels and gender.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

There are some expressions and terms which have been used frequently in this study. Here are some definitions for them.

●**Language learning strategies (LLS):** Language learning strategies have been defined as operations employed by the learner to assist in the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and the use of information or as steps taken by learners to enhance their own learning (Oxford, 1990). O'Malley and Chamot (1990) also defined them as skills that are acquired as declarative knowledge, which would subsequently become procedural as a result of extensive practice. O'Malley & Chamot (1990) classified LLSs into three types: metacognitive (knowing about learning and controlling learning through planning, monitoring and evaluating learning activity), cognitive (manipulation or transformation of the material to be learned) and social/affective (involving the learner in communicative interaction with another person, for example, collaboration with peers and teachers in the learning process). Oxford (1990) divided the LLSs into two broad categories of direct and indirect dichotomy. Direct learning strategies consist of cognitive, memory and compensation strategies whereas indirect strategies include metacognitive, social and affective ones.

●**Intelligence:** The term 'intelligence' is traditionally defined as intelligence Quotient (IQ) which designates the ratio between mental age and chronological age. In this view, the individuals' abilities are measured via their verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences. Gardner (1983) disagreed with such definition of intelligence and challenged the notion that intelligence could be objectively measured and reduced to a single number or "IQ" score. Thus, he stressed that the IQ test did not provide information on other types of intelligences, how to use our minds well and to probe and solve problems.

According to Gardner (1983), each individual has a multitude of intelligences that are quite independent of each other. He defined intelligence as the ability to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural settings (Gardner, 1993). He (1993) then developed the theory of MI. Accordingly, he stated that a human intellectual competence

must entail a set of skills for problem solving, enabling the individuals to resolve genuine problems or difficulties that they encounters and must also entail the potential for finding or creating problems-thereby laying the groundwork for the acquisition of new knowledge.

●**Multiple Intelligences:** Gardner's (1993) theory challenges traditional, narrower views of intelligence. Previously accepted ideas of human intellectual capacity held that an individual's intelligence is a fixed entity throughout his lifetime and that intelligence can be measured through an individual's logical and language abilities. According to Gardner's theory, an intelligence encompasses the ability to create and solve problems, create products or provide services that are valued within a culture or society. Originally, the theory accounted for seven separate intelligences. Subsequently, with the publishing of Gardner's *Intelligence reframed* in 1999, two more intelligences were added to the list.

The theory right now includes nine intelligences, which encompass a wide range of human potentials and abilities. Gardner's theory divides human intelligence into musical, linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, bodily kinesthetic, and existential.

1.7. Organization of the Study

This thesis includes five chapters. Chapter one deals with a short introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem and purpose of the study, significance of and justifications for the study, research questions and hypotheses, definition of key terms, and the outline of the thesis. In this chapter, the prerequisite information such as definitions, subcategories and realms of the topics were prepared.

Chapter two will present the review of the related literature. This chapter consists of two parts: Multiple Intelligences and language learning strategies. Then, the related works, researches and articles will be gathered and inserted in chapter two. Different definitions will be clarified comprehensively.

Chapter three is concerned with the methodology and data collection and introduces the materials and the procedure of the study. Next, the data analysis is discussed and the design of the study is elaborated.

Chapter four will present data analysis and results. After a theoretically enriched account, and reviewing the related works which have done, numerical data needs to be improved. In this chapter, the data obtained through questionnaires will be analyzed and the