مجله علوم انساني از انتشارات معاونت پژوهشي دانشگاه الزهرا (س)

درجه اين مجله به موجب نامه شماره **2/5022** مورخ **1369/2/26** وزارت فرهنگ و آموزش عالي « علمي پژوهشي» است.

صاحب امتياز: دانشگاه الزهرا (س) **مدير مسئول:** دكتر سوسن قهرماني قاجار

سردبير: دكتر عليمحمد ولوي **ويراستار انگليسي:** دكتر پرويز مفتون

مدير داخلي: دكتر اسماعيل حسنزاده **دبير علمي ويژه نامه:** دكتر پرويز مفتون

دبير اجرايي: مهتاب جعفري ـ مهرنوش فروتن

چاپ و صحافي: انتشارات دانشگاه الزهرا (س)
حروفچين و صفحه آرا: ليلا مشهودی
طراح جلد: اشرف السادات موسوي‌لر
ترتيب انتشار: فصلنامه
تيراژ: **1000** نسخه بهاء:
10000 ريال

براي دسترسي به عناوين و چكيده مقالات به نشاني سايت معاونت پژوهشي دانشگاه الزهراء (س) و پايگاه اطلاعات علمی جهاد دانشگاهی مراجعه فرماييد. http://research.alzahra.ac.ir

آدرس: تهران ـ ونك، دانشگاه الزهراء (س)
دفتر معاونت پژوهشي ـ كدپستي 1993891176
تلفن: 8-88044051 داخلي 2201
مستقيم 88058908

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Journal of Humanities

Al-Zahra University

University of Al-Zahra Publications

Quarterly Journal of Humanities Alzahra University
Vol. 18, N. 72, Summer 2008

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Abstract

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The Relationship between Iranian EFL Teachers ` Multiple Intelligences and their Successful Teaching in Language Institutes

R. Pishghadam [1]
F. Moafian [2]

Abstract

This study, first, examined the role of Iranian EFL teachers' multiple intelligences (MI) in their success in language teaching in language institutes. In the second place, the role of gender and the most effective intelligences of teachers with respect to their teaching success was investigated. To this end, 92 EFL teachers were selected according to available sampling from different language institutes in Mashhad. At the end of the term, the teachers sat through the Multiple Intelligence Developmental Assessment Scale (MIDAS). At the same time, a questionnaire -Students' View of an Ideal Teacher- was given to the students of those teachers (N=779). By this questionnaire, the teachers' performance was evaluated by their students in terms of teacher's teaching capabilities, personality, order and regularity, supplementary programs and activities,

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and social and educational life. The subsequent data analysis and statistical calculations via correlation and t-test revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' success and their interpersonal, kinesthetic, and musical intelligences, but there is no significant relationship between teachers' success and other types of intelligences. Furthermore, no significant differences were found between gender and MI with respect to teaching success.

Key terms: Language institutes, Language teaching, Multiple intelligences, Success

1. Introduction

There are different approaches to understanding intelligence. The psychometric view is the most traditional one. According to this approach, there is a single intelligence, which is often called general intelligence. Every individual is born with a certain intelligence or potential intelligence, which is difficult to be changed. Psychologists can assess one's intelligence quotient (IQ) by means of short-answer tests and other purer measures, such as the time it takes to react to a flashing light or the presence of a certain pattern of brain waves (Gardner, 2004). But traditional IQ tests did not satisfy researchers, so they developed a number of alternative theories, all of which suggest that intelligence is the result of a number of independent abilities that uniquely contribute to human performance. These theories suggest that rather than being fixed, unitary, and predetermined, intelligence is modifiable, multi-faceted, and capable of development (Gardner, 1993; Sternberg, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978; Yekovich, 1994, cited in Campbell, 2000). Some of these theories have been summarized in the following paragraphs:

Sternberg (1986) in his triarchic view of intelligence, proposed three types of intelligence: 1) Componential Intelligence (analytical thinking): academic

abilities to compare, evaluate, and solve problems. 2) Experiential Intelligence (creativity and insight): the ability to invent, discover, and theorize. 3) Practical Intelligence (street smarts): contextual abilities to adapt to the environment (Brown, 2000; Chastain, 1988). This theory of intelligence claims that intelligent behavior stems from a balance between analytical, creative, and practical abilities and that these abilities function collectively to allow individuals to achieve success within particular socio-cultural contexts (Sternberg, 1988).

Gardner (1993), in his MI theory, proposes that human intelligence has multiple dimensions that must be acknowledged and developed in education. He notes that traditional IQ or intelligence tests (such as Stanford-Binet test) measure only logic and language, but there are other equally important types of intelligence (Richrads & Rodgers, 2001).

According to Gardner (1993), intelligence is a biopsychological potential. Intelligences cannot be seen or counted. They are used to process information and can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture. These potentials' activation depends upon the values of a particular culture, the opportunities available in that culture, and the personal decisions made by individuals and/or their families, schoolmasters, and others.

Gardner's MI theory posits that human beings possess at least eight intelligences, to a greater or lesser extent. They are as follow (Armstrong, 2000, p.2):

1) Linguistic intelligence: The capacity to use words effectively, whether orally or in writing. This intelligence includes the ability to manipulate the syntax or structure of language, the phonology of sounds of language, the semantics or meanings of language, and the pragmatic dimensions or practical uses of language. Some of these uses include rhetoric (using language to convince others to take a specific course of action), mnemonics (using language to remember information), explanation

(using language to inform), and metalanguage (using language to talk about itself).

2) Logical-Mathematical intelligence: The capacity to use numbers effectively (e.g., as a mathetician, tax accountant, or statistician) and to reason well (e.g., as a scientist, computer programmer, or logician). This intelligence includes sensitivity to logical patterns and relationships, statement and propositions (if–then, cause–effect) functions, and other related abstractions. The kinds of processes used in the service of logical-mathematical intelligence include: categorization, classification, inference, generalization, calculation, and hypothesis testing.

3) Spatial intelligence: The ability to perceive the visual-spatial world accurately (e.g., as a hunter, scout, or guide) and to perform transformations on those perceptions (e.g., as an interior decorator, architect, artist, or inventor). This intelligence involves sensitivity to color, line, shape, form, space, and the relationships that exist between these elements. It includes the capacity to visualize, to graphically represent visual or special ideas, and to orient oneself appropriately in a special matrix.

4) Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence: Expertise in using one's whole body to express ideas and feelings (e.g., as an actor, a mime, an athlete, or a dancer) and facility in using one's hands to produce or transform things (e.g., as a craftsperson, a sculpture, or mechanic). This intelligence includes specific physical skills, such as coordination, balance, dexterity, strength, flexibility, and speed, as well as proprioceptive, tactile, and haptic capacities.

5) Musical intelligence: The capacity to perceive (e.g., as music aficionado), discriminate (e.g., as a music critic), transform (e.g., a composer), and express (e.g., as a performer) musical forms. This intelligence includes sensitivity to rhythm, pitch and melody, as well as timber or tone color of a musical piece. One can have a figural or "top-down" understanding of music (global, intuitive), a formal or "bottom-up"

understanding (analytic, technical), or both.

6) Interpersonal intelligence: The ability to perceive and make distinction in the moods, intentions, motivations, and feelings of other people. This can include sensitivity to facial expression, voice, and gestures; the capacity for discriminating among many different kinds of interpersonal cues; and the ability to respond effectively to those cues in some pragmatic way (e.g., to influence a group of people to follow a certain line of action).

7) Intrapersonal intelligence: Self-knowledge and the ability to act adaptively on the basis of that knowledge. This intelligence includes having an accurate picture of oneself (one's strength and limitations); awareness of inner moods, intentions, motivations, temperaments, and desires; and the capacity for self-discipline, self-understanding, and self-esteem.

8) Naturalistic intelligence: Expertise in the recognition and classification of the numerous species-the flora and fauna-of an individual's environment. This also includes sensitivity to other natural phenomena (e.g., cloud formations and mountains) and, in the case of those growing up in an urban environment, the capacity to discriminate among nonliving forms such as cars and sneakers.

Daniel Golman (1995) introduced the concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI). He claimed that efficient mental or cognitive processing is necessary for controlling even a handful of core emotions-anger, fear, enjoyment, love, disgust, and others. More to the point, Golman compared the rational mind with the emotional mind. In comparing the rational mind with the emotional mind, Golman argued that the emotional mind is far quicker and acts without even pausing to consider what it is doing. He stated that the quickness of emotional mind prevents a deliberate, analytic reflection that is the sign of the thinking mind.

The theoretical framework of the present study is based on Gardner's MI theory. This theory has a positive and expansive view towards intelligence (Campbell, 2000). It seems that this theory is a blanket term

which covers all types of intelligences which have been mentioned in the previous models of intelligence. For example, IQ just pays attention to language and logic; in other words, it considers the left hemisphere of the brain; EI considers individual's feeling and his relationship with other people and, in general, the right hemisphere of the brain. But, besides considering linguistic, logical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences MI theory considers other capabilities of human beings. It considers both heart and mind, both left and right hemispheres of the brain. Moreover, some researchers claim that, among contemporary theories of intelligence, the one holding the greatest promise for education is Gardner's theory of MI because it gives us a new look towards students intelligences; in other words, proposes that each student has one or more intellectual strengths (Campbell, 2000, p. 8).

The same story can be true for teachers, as well. It means this theory suggests that teachers have also a range of strengths and capabilities that can benefit from while performing their profession, of course, if they become aware of such great capabilities in their nature and find out which of these intelligences are more influential in their success. Striving hard to enrich the influential intelligences, they achieve one of the ways that can change them to effective teachers, since they play a very important role in teaching and learning processes, and their effectiveness can have great influence on language learners' successes. As Pettis (2002) stated teachers are student advocates, bridge to society and change agents. They can be an agent for change in a world in desperate need of change: Change from competition to cooperation, from powerlessness to empowerment, from conflict to resolution, from prejudice to understanding (Brown, 2001, p. 445)

Another positive point about MI is its dynamic nature. In other words, it is not static in this view since Gardner considers the equal capacity for everyone to develop all intelligences to a reasonably high level of its performance on the condition that appropriate encouragement, enrichment,

and instruction are available (Armstrong, 2000).

Since 1983 onwards that Gardner proposed MI theory, the theory drew many educationists' attention in language teaching and learning. As a result, many investigations have been carried out in the field of language learning and teaching, focusing on MI theory. Some studies have investigated the ways MI is applied in classroom (Anderson, 1998; Green & Tanner, 2005; Palmberg, 2002; Saeidi, 2003). Others have surveyed using MI to prepare different teaching strategies and methods (Hagadus-McHale, 2005; Haley, 2001; Willen & Anders, 2005). Some have considered students' MI and explored the relationship between students' MI and their different linguistic abilities (Al-Balhan, 2006; Diaz & Heining-Boynton, 1995; Iranmanesh, 2005; Manzour-ol-ajdad, 2007; Rabbani, 2006). But, except one case, none of the MI-related studies to date have considered teachers' MI and its application in language learning and teaching environments.

To our knowledge, the only work which has been done to investigate the role of teacher' MI in their success in language teaching is Pishghadam and Moafian (2008). In this study, the researchers, first, attempted to examine the role of Iranian EFL teachers' MI in their success in language teaching at high schools. Second, they investigated the role of gender and the most effective intelligences of teachers with respect to their teaching success. To this end, they selected a population of 93 English language teachers according to available sampling from different high schools in Mashhad. At the end of the schooling year, the teachers sat through the Multiple Intelligence Developmental Assessment Scale (MIDAS). At the same time, Students' View of an Ideal Teacher questionnaire was given to the students of those teachers (N = 2287). The subsequent data analysis and statistical calculations via correlation and t-test revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' success and their linguistic and interpersonal intelligences, but there is no significant relationship between teachers' success and other types of intelligences. Furthermore, no significant

differences were found between gender and MI with respect to teaching success. Since the study has been conducted in high schools, the researchers decided to carry out a similar study in language institutes to compare the results.

Thus, the present research investigates the role of Iranian EFL teachers' MI in their success in language teaching in language institutes. More specifically, the study addresses the following questions:

- Is there any relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' MI and their success in language teaching in language institutes?
- Is there any relationship between gender and the type of MI with respect to teachers' success in language institutes?

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The first group of participants was 92 Iranian EFL teachers aged between 18 and 60. They were 50 females and 42 males from different socio-economic backgrounds. 90% of the teachers had Bachelor of Arts and 10% of them had Master of Arts in the English language with 1 to 35 years of teaching experience.

The second group of participants consisted of 779 Iranian EFL learners (students of the above-mentioned teachers). They were 591 females and 188 males whose age was between 14 and 36 years and came from different socio-economic backgrounds. Their language proficiency levels varied from elementary to advanced level and their educational levels varied from high school to Ph.D.

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. MIDAS Questionnaire

To measure English language teachers' MI, Multiple Intelligence

Developmental Assessment Scale (MIDAS) questionnaire (Shearer, 1996; cited in Hosseini, 2003) was used, which consists of one hundred and nineteen questions about eight intelligences which are mentioned in Gardner's MI theory. In this questionnaire, the number of questions for each intelligence is as follows:

	Mus.	Kinesth.	Math	Spat.	Ling.	Inter.	Intra.	Natur.
The number of questions	14	13	17	15	20	18	9	13

The result of factor analysis revealed that the questionnaire measures eight hypothetical constructs (Hosseini, 2003). Five studies have examined the *internal consistency* of the items within each scale. The overall alpha coefficients for all subscales range from 0.78 to 0.89. Kinesthetic is the only scale where the reliability is slightly below the desired level of 0.80, this is most likely due to the nature of the item set which is split between large and fine motor and expressive movements (Shearer, 1996, cited in Hosseini, 2003).

To measure teachers' MI, the researchers employed the translated version of the questionnaire. The questionnaire has been translated by Hosseini (2003) from English into Persian. The participants were asked to indicate on a six-point differential scale to what extent these questions characterized them. The average time to complete the test was 50-60 minutes.

In this study, the total reliability of the questionnaire was 0.94, and the reliability of the questionnaire for each intelligence calculated via Cronbach's Alpha was found to be as follows:

Mus.	Kinesth.	Math	Spat.	Ling.	Inter.	Intra.	Natur.

r	0.82	0.75	0.82	0.79	0.87	0.84	0.78	0.82

2.2.2. Students' View of an Ideal Teacher Questionnaire

To evaluate language teachers' performance and success in language teaching, the researchers employed the translated version of Gadzella's (1971) Students' View of an Ideal Teacher (SVIT) questionnaire which was made valid by Pishghadam and Moafian (2008). The questionnaire consists of twenty four questions with yes/no answers about teachers' performance in their classes. The researchers used factor analysis to measure the construct validity of the questionnaire. The results of factor analysis demonstrated that the questionnaire measures five constructs which are labeled as *teacher's teaching capability*, *teacher's personality*, *teacher's order and regularity*, *supplementary programs and activities*, *teacher's social, and educational life*. In this study, Cronbach's Alpha was used to estimate the reliability of the questionnaire which was 0.79.

2.3. Data collection

The study took place in language institutes in Mashhad. At the end of the term, the teachers were asked to take the MIDAS questionnaire. They took the questionnaire home, completed it, and then, next session, gave it to the researchers. At the same time, SVIT questionnaire was given to the students of those teachers. In the questionnaire, the teachers' performance was evaluated by their students. Completing the questionnaire lasted approximately 10 minutes, and it was done in the classroom. The students completed the questionnaire in the presence of the researchers.

2.4. Data Analysis

MIDAS and SVIT questionnaires first were scored based on the guidelines provided by Shearer (1996) and Gadzella (1971), and then the scores of MI's eight intelligences and the total SVIT scores were computed.

In MIDAS questionnaire, for each question, there were six choices and the scores for each question ranged from 0 to 5. The score of every intelligence was calculated through dividing the sum of the scores of the questions of that intelligence by the number of the questions in the intended intelligence.

In the SVIT questionnaire, there were 24 questions. For each question, there were two choices (yes & no). 0 was allocated to no and 1 was allocated to yes. The sum of the scores of all questions was calculated for each student of the teacher. The total teacher's performance score was the mean score of all scores that a teacher received from his/her learners.

To determine the role of MI in teachers' success, Pearson product-moment correlation was applied to the data. To investigate the role of gender in MI with respect to teachers' success, t-test was utilized.

3. Results

To determine whether there is any significant correlation between teachers' MI and their success in language teaching, Pearson product-moment correlation was employed. The results of correlation revealed that there is a significant correlation between Iranian EFL teachers' success and their musical ($r = 0.236$, $p = .02$, $\acute{\alpha} = 05$), kinesthetic ($r = 0.267$, $p = .02$, $\acute{\alpha} = 05$), and interpersonal ($r = 0.257$, $p = .03$, $\acute{\alpha} = 05$) intelligences, but there are no significant correlations between teachers' success and their other intelligences (see Table 1).

Table 1: The results of correlation between teachers' MI scores and their

SVIT scores in language institutes.

	Mus.	Kinesth.	Math	Spat.	Ling.	Inter.	Intra.	Natur.
Success	.236*	.267*	.042	.143	.193	.257*	.096	.090

* p<.05

To determine the role of gender in the types of intelligences which influence teachers' success, independent t-test was used. Since gender does not play any significant role in teachers' success (t (90) = -.257, p = .79 > ά = .05), it is quite natural to conclude that MI does not influence the teachers` success (see Table 2). Therefore, the hypothesis that there is a relationship between gender and teachers' success is not supported.

Table 2: The results of independent t-test for determining the role of gender in MI in language institutes

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Success (gender)	-.257	90	.798

4. Discussion

The current study explored the role of Iranian EFL teachers' MI in their success in language teaching in language institutes. In this part, responses

extracted from data analyses have been summarized and presented in a manner that addresses the research questions developed to guide this study.

Research Question 1: The study was designed to address the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' MI and their success in language teaching in language institutes. In response to this question, three significant relationships were reported. The results indicated that there is a significant relationship between teachers' success and their kinesthetic, musical, and interpersonal intelligences, but there is no significant relationship between teachers' success and other types of intelligences. This means that those teachers who are more successful in their profession in language institutes are the ones that their kinesthetic, musical, and interpersonal intelligences are more active than those of other teachers.

With regard to interpersonal intelligence, the results of the study confirm the findings of Lowman (1994 ; 1996), Feldman (1996), and Saroyan and Snell (1997). These studies showed that top-ranked features of effective teaching, in college students' view, include enthusiasm, interest/motivation/inspiration, knowledge of subject matter, clarity, organization, and interpersonal concern. This study also confirms the findings of Pishghadam (2007) in which he found a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and second language learning. One important competency in emotional intelligence is interpersonal ability (Bar-On, 1997). Therefore, it is natural that teachers' interpersonal ability can be conducive to students' learning.

In terms of musical intelligence, the results of the present research support the findings of Serafina, Crowder, and Repp (1984) and Palermo (1978). Both of these studies showed a strong association between music and verbal learning and they contended that music increases rote memorization. As we know, rote memorization can be of great help for learning phonetic system of a language. Teachers with active musical intelligence are better candidate for using musical strategies to facilitate

language learning. Moreover, they are more interested in using such strategies. If we look at this matter from the teachers' perspective, active musical intelligence causes the teacher to be more sensitive to stress, intonation, minute differences between sounds, and the manner of articulation. As a result, manifestation of this attention appears in teachers' production (speaking).

With regard to bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, all cultures throughout the history of humankind have relied on kinesics for conveying important messages (Brown, 2000, p. 262). It seems that teachers are not excluded from this rule. They can use kinesics as the facilitating devices in teaching and learning processes to convey educational materials to the students, especially when students' language proficiency is low. According to Brown (2001), teachers' voice is not the only producing instrument available to the teacher in the classroom. Nonverbal messages are also powerful. In language classes, especially where students may not have all the skills necessary to understand verbal language, their attention is drawn to nonverbal communication. Thus, active kinesthetic intelligence of teachers can be of great help in the teaching process, particularly, at the beginning levels.

Besides, the results revealed that the influential teachers' MI in their teaching success differ with the change in the context of education. In high schools, teachers' linguistic and interpersonal intelligences are more effective in their success (Pishghadam & Moafian, 2008), whereas in language institutes, teachers' musical, kinesthetic, and interpersonal intelligences are more influential in their success.

Generally speaking, the selection of the procedures which are used in an educational environment is based on individual teaching styles, professional training, student population and institutional support (Snider, 2001). It seems that the teachers' use of their capabilities follow the same rule, as well. There are some external stimuli that influence teachers' view towards

using their abilities. One of these stimuli is the instructional materials that teachers teach. As the books which are taught in high schools are full of the materials which are related to linguistic matters without paying attention to other helpful devices such as use of colors, pictures, music, etc., the most important device that teachers use to present the lesson is language; thus, linguistic intelligence becomes very important. But, in language institutes, the books which are used as the sources of information have paid attention to more learning facilitators, such as pictures, colors, mime, etc. Thus, while a teacher is teaching, he should consider more aspects of learning; as a result, the inner abilities that he/she uses have more variety.

The second factor is financial support of the educational setting. In private language institutes, there is more financial support than public schools, and the teachers are provided with more facilities to teach language, such as cassette player, video, computer, language laboratory, and so on. Therefore, in such contexts, the teachers are provided with suitable opportunity to maneuver on their abilities better.

The third stimulus that brings differences between private language institutes and public schools in terms of teachers' MI is the difference between rules and regularities in these two educational environments. Public schools have strict rules; the teachers cannot cross special borders which are determined by formal educational system, while language classes in language institutes are livelier, and the variety of different strategies may be more observable there.

Research Question 2: the study examined whether the influential teachers' MI in their professional success differs with regard to their gender. The result revealed that gender differences have no effect on teachers' success; as a result, no influence on their influential MI in their success was reported.

Based on the findings of this study, language teachers in language institutes are recommended to be familiar with these intelligences, striving hard to enhance these types of intelligences within themselves. Furthermore,

teacher trainers are expected to familiarize their students with these effective factors in successful teaching. Certainly, awareness of the importance of body language, knowledge of effective communication (sympathy, empathy, etc.), and knowledge of music- especially in English classes in which teachers' stress and intonation are of great importance-are keys to successful teaching in language institutes. Moreover, materials developers are required, while preparing the materials for teachers and students of language teaching, to design materials which encompass these types of intelligences that are effective in successful language teaching.

Some limitations of the study have to be taken into account. In some classes, the students' questionnaires were filled out in the presence of the language teacher; the teacher's presence, to some extent, influenced students' answers. Besides, language proficiency level of students was not considered. The study can be conducted focusing on special proficiency level. In high schools, all of the students were between 14 to 18 years old, whereas in language institutes, learners were between 14 to 36 years old. In terms of gender and teachers' MI, the research should be done with sufficient numbers of participants in each sex. To our knowledge, this is the first attempt to explore the relationship between English language teachers' MI and their success in language institutes. Thus, this study should be replicated. In this study, teachers' capabilities were assessed only through questionnaires. In a similar study, researchers can make use of other kinds of evaluative tools such as observation, interviewing students, etc. or a combination of different assessment devices to assess teachers' effectiveness in classroom setting.

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