

**THE REPRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES
IN NORTH STAR COURSEBOOK: A CONTENT ANALYSIS**

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Abstract

This paper discusses Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory represented in North Star: "Reading and Writing" and "Listening and speaking" books for level one. From each of the books a chapter has been selected for analysis. For the Reading and Writing book, the chapter contains 36 activities and 31 activities for the Listening and Speaking book. Content analysis has been used along with a list of activities adopted from Botelho (2003) to investigate the occurrences in which different intelligences are enhanced throughout the activities. The results of the research proved an imbalance in the distribution of intelligences. It also showed that the most dominant intelligence was verbal/linguistic followed by intrapersonal, interpersonal, spatial/visual, logical/mathematical and bodily kinesthetic. As for the rest of the intelligences, they had no place in the activities which are suggested to be catered for with supplementary materials.

Index Terms— MI, Intelligence, EFL, Checklist, English Textbooks, North Star activities, IQ.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sheldon (1988: cited in Kirkgoz, 2009: pp.79) states that a textbook is a crucial part of any English Language teaching program. This would be, undoubtedly, true for the Kurdistan region of Iraq as teachers use many different textbooks as a primary source to teach English as a second language across the high schools and universities. Therefore, a careful investigation and analysis of the books would be an important and necessary endeavor to make sure that English is taught according to the new trends in English language teaching. Moreover, to make sure the books being taught cater for students' individual needs in terms of cognitive capacities. Wu and Alrabha (2009: cited in Abbasian and Khajavi, 2012: pp.112) state that the

difference between modern and traditional methods of teaching is that modern approaches to teaching account for individual needs of students. Thinking that all students learn in the same way is contrary to modern research in the field of education and as well as language teaching. The view of intelligence held previously, known as IQ, accounted only for two intelligences, namely verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences. However, this view was challenged by Howard Gardner in 1983 when he put forward the theory of multiple intelligences (MI) in his book *Frames of Mind*. Gardner (1983) has a different definition of intelligence and suggests that every person has a set of seven intelligences, namely verbal-linguistic, mathematical-logical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical-rhythmic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Thus, in integrating these realms of intelligence, Armstrong (2009: pp.72) advises that teachers must use various strategies in their teaching in order to be appealing for their students. For example, the use of music might be appealing to musically inclined learners; however it might not be so to others. Furthermore, using pictures and maps would be interesting to students who are spatially intelligent but not to those who are stronger in other areas. At the beginning, Gardner (2006) identified only seven intelligences, but later in the late 1990s, he added the naturalist intelligence and considered the possibility of having other candidate intelligences such as existential, moral and spiritual. Educators have to keep in mind that these intelligences are equally valuable and everyone has them as mentioned previously. In addition, they can be changed and trained, which means they can be stronger at times in case of weakness (Armstrong 1999: cited in Arnold and Fonesca 2004: pp.120). Therefore, it's crucially necessary that English language teaching textbooks consider the different intelligences in their designs. The current paper tries to

analyze *North Star: Reading and Writing and Speaking and Listening* Level 1 to examine whether it has accounted for the theory of multiple intelligences in its content.

Importance of the research and its questions

There is a great deal of research into the analyses of different English textbooks to investigate the distribution of MI theory in the textbooks (Abbasian & Khajavi, 2012; Mirzaei, Mohebbi & Taaseh, 2014). All of the research in this area acknowledge an imbalance in the distribution of intelligences through the content of these books. In such English textbooks certain intelligences are dominant, some others are less so and there are others that are completely absent (Taase, 2012; Estaji and Nafisi, 2014). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to analyze the content of the North Star: Reading and Writing and Listening and Speaking book Level 1 and to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent multiple intelligences are present in the textbooks?
2. What are the most and the least dominant intelligences in the textbooks?

II. METHODOLOGY:

A. Design

In this study, a quantitative approach has been used along with content analysis of the book *North Star: Reading and Writing and Listening and Speaking* employing Botelho's (2003: pp.100-101) list of activities. The list was developed based on different sources representing activities accounting for nine intelligences namely, verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, and existential intelligences (Botelho, 2003: pp.100-101).

B. *North Star: The Levels and Content*

The North Star series comprises of five levels. Each level has two sets of books dedicated to reading and writing, and listening and speaking. Each of the books contains eight units which deal with different topics. As part of the series, Level one Listening and Speaking book contains eight units of which each of them deals with a different topic. Within each unit, there are three parts. The first part is presented with a picture and some general questions about the topic in question. The second part is on listening and offers a text with an audio reading the text along with some listening and speaking activities. The third part focuses on speaking along with other activities dealing with grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation and that also ends with a unit project with all

of these the unit comprises 31 activities. Similarly, The Reading and Writing book has eight units as well. Each of the units has three parts in which part one focuses on the topic, part two focuses on reading and part three focuses on writing. This unit also contains 36 activities.

C. Material

For the purpose of this research unit five is selected to be analyzed and assessed according to the list of activities proposed by Botelho (2003: pp.100-101). The unit is selected because by this time both students and teachers have been through half of the book and they are already familiar with the content and techniques used in the book. As mentioned earlier, just like the other units, this unit consists of three parts and within these are activities focusing on speaking, listening, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation and it contains 31 activities. Similarly, unit 5 of the Reading and Writing book has three parts and activities dealing with writing and reading. The unit also has 36 activities and all of the activities from both books have been analyzed to see what intelligences are incorporated within the activities.

D. Data Analysis

The analysis of the book, as mentioned previously, is based on Botelho's (2003: pp.100-101) list of activities. The list of activities offers different materials and/or activities under each intelligence type of which the researcher can compare the content of the book with the activities to see the occurrences of each intelligence in each activity.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Description of Gardner's Intelligences

The following description has been adopted from (Botelho, 2003: pp.26) which he wrote them based on different sources. Thus, this is an attempt to give a brief account of each of them.

Verbal/Linguistic: this intelligence involves using language effectively such as learning grammar and being able to recall information and tell jokes, use metaphors, similes and analogies.

Logical/Mathematical: Having the skill to make reasoning well and deal with numbers. This intelligence is related to scientific thinking. This intelligence is usually high in people who are mathematicians, accountants, computer programmers, logicians and engineers.

Spatial/Visual: People who are sensitive to form, color, shape and lines. They are also good at visualizing mentally or graphically. The intelligence is also related to problem solving and space or using maps.

Bodily/Kinesthetic: this related to body movements in that the person is able to solve problems through body movements and gestures.

Musical: this intelligence is usually strong in people who are sensitive to melody, tone and pitches. Composers, musicians and conductors are usually strong in this. However, other people who enjoy singing in the shower, sing alone with a song could also be strong in this.

Interpersonal: being able to work in teams, understand others and be part of communities. It also involves the ability to understand others and have empathy to be sensitive to others' emotions.

Intrapersonal: being able to understand oneself. To be able to work alone and use knowledge of oneself to work effectively.

Naturalist: the ability to understand the natural world. Moreover, to be able to recognize and categorize different species. people who are strong in this realm are biologists, naturalists, environmentalists and geologists.

B. Previous Work on Multiple Intelligences

The emergence of the theory of multiple intelligences by Howard Gardner yields the need to reconsider the design of English language teaching textbooks in terms of content. Many textbooks have been analyzed considering the MI theory based on checklists developed by researchers deduced from different intelligences. Therefore, this section aims to provide some background information on the analyses of textbooks across different EFL contexts.

Jozaghi and Razmjoo (2010) analyzed the Top-Notch series starting from its fundamental level. Units from each book were randomly chosen to be analyzed. The findings of their study showed that all intelligences were enhanced in different rates with verbal linguistic being the most dominant and naturalist and existential being the least dominant. In the same line of research, Taase (2012) investigated the representation of three course books and the results of the study showed the absence of some intelligences in the course books namely, musical, bodily/kinesthetic and naturalist intelligences. As for the other intelligences, Visual/spatial and linguistic intelligences were highly enhanced, while interpersonal, intrapersonal, and logical/mathematical intelligences are enhanced at lower ratios.

Estaji and Nafisi (2014) conducted a research investigating the frequency of MI principles in a four-level course book for young learners and found out that there was an imbalance in terms of activating different intelligences. The results indicated that the most enhanced intelligence was linguistic intelligence and the least activated one was naturalist intelligence. Further, there was not any instance of existential and spiritual intelligences.

Similarly, Salimi, Satariyan, and Taase (2014) carried out a research in which they analyzed four EFL course books in light of MI theory along with EFL students' preferences of the MI. The results showed that the learners preferred logical/mathematical and interpersonal

intelligences while they were fully represented in the course books. In addition, Linguistic and visual/spatial intelligences were also enhanced in the course books at a good ratio.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in table 1 below, there is an imbalance in the intelligences enhanced in the activities from the listening and speaking book. The most dominant intelligence throughout the activities is verbal-linguistic intelligence representing 100% in the activities. This might be justifiable as the subject of the book is for language teaching and should focus on language. This is in line with several researches investigating the distribution of MI across EFL textbooks. Estaji and Nafisi (2014) investigated the representation of MI in young learners' EFL textbooks and had the same finding in which verbal-linguistic intelligence was the most dominant. They also state that this is understandably logical as the focus of the book is on language teaching. This is followed by intrapersonal intelligence counting for 58% as many of the activities require students to either read or listen to something. Following this, comes interpersonal intelligence which is represented in the activities by 32%. These include activities that require students to work in groups, in pairs or share ideas together with their classmates or their teacher. A lesser dominant intelligence is spatial-visual intelligence as some of the activities feature charts and pictures which is represented by only 29%. After this, a decline can be seen in the rest of the intelligences with logical-mathematical and bodily-kinesthetic each comprising only 6.5%. Lastly, there is a complete absence of existential, naturalist and musical intelligences across the activities.

Table 1

FREQUENCIES OF MI: LISTENING AND SPEAKING BOOK					
Parts	One: Topi c	Two: Listenin g	Three: Speakin g	Tota l	%
No. of Activities	1	14	16	31	
Visual	1	5	3	9	29
linguistic	1	14	16	31	100
intrapersonal	1	10	7	18	58
logical	1	0	1	2	6.5

naturalist	0	0	0	0	0
Existential	0	0	0	0	0
Interpersonal	0	3	7	10	%32
Bodily	0	0	1	1	6.5
Musical	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2 shows the analysis of MI represented in the activities in North Star: Reading and Writing book. The analysis shows a great deal of discrepancy among the different intelligences across the book. The results show that there are only four intelligences activated in the activities and the rest of them, including logical, naturalist, existential, interpersonal, bodily kinesthetic and musical are absent. Nasri, Ketabi and Dastjerdi (2012) had a similar finding in their paper in which locally published ELT textbooks in Iran were analyzed and they found that bodily/kinesthetic and naturalist intelligences had not been catered for in the books.

The most dominant intelligence is verbal-linguistic counting for 100% of the activities. This finding is similar to Abbasian and Khajavi (2012) who found that verbal-linguistic intelligence is the most dominant in their analysis. Likewise, they also found a complete absence of musical and bodily/kinesthetic intelligences. Furthermore, in the analysis of *North Star: Reading and writing* it was found that intrapersonal intelligence is enhanced in most of the activities along with verbal-linguistic comprising 97%. These are almost fully represented in the book as most of the activities focus on language and require learners to read or write alone and most activities incorporate these two intelligences together. These are followed by spatial-visual and interpersonal intelligences with each counting for 25% of the activities.

FREQUENCIES OF MI: READING AND WRITING BOOK					
Parts	One:	Two:	Three:	Tota	%
	Topi	Listenin	Speakin	l	
	c	g	g		
No. of Activities	1	14	16	31	
Visual	1	5	3	9	25

linguistic	1	14	21	36	100
intrapersonal	1	13	21	35	97
logical	0	0	0	0	0
naturalist	0	0	0	0	0
Existential	0	0	0	0	0
Interpersonal	0	2	7	9	25
Bodily	0	0	0	0	0
Musical	0	0	0	0	0

V.

VI. CONCLUSION

As for the first research question, the MI principles are present in the books at different ratios with some of them being neglected in the activities and this has been explained quantitatively in the findings and discussion. However, it will be further addressed in response to the second question. The results of this study indicate that there is a great deal of imbalance across activities analyzed. It indicates that the most activated intelligence throughout the activities is verbal/linguistic which, as mentioned before, is quite justifiable as the focus is on languages (Jozaghi and Razmjoo, 2010). This, followed by other intelligences, such as intrapersonal, interpersonal and visual intelligences. In the case of the Listening and Speaking book logical/mathematical and bodily/kinesthetic were activated at lower ratios. However, other intelligences such as musical, existential, naturalist and logical are not catered for in the book. The fact that some intelligences have not been catered for in the books is something to be reconsidered and made up for.

VII. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Drawing from the conclusion of this research, it is very important for EFL teachers who teach North Star to bear in mind that not all intelligences are enhanced in the book. It is very crucial to make up for this with supplementary material that enhances other intelligences in order to take into consideration meeting different needs of different students who might be intellectually different from one another. In addition, it is very crucial that teachers familiarize themselves with the principles of the MI theory in order to be able to best supplement the lack of intelligences represented in books they teach.

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