

## **THE IMPACT OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES ON SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*There have been lots of researches regarding the issue on how human beings manage to acquire L2. Many scholars have come up with different experiments and hypotheses hoping to find out about what factors assist learners to develop their habit of learning or what causes them to be successful in learning languages. Behavioral perspective put forward the theory related to the fundamentals of learning for all creatures; Cognitive approach gave us a chance to understand difficulties in language and thought connection; and, sociocultural perspective convinced us to pay attention to learners' socio-cultural insight. In this case study we will try to analyze the findings regarding multiple intelligence by comparing and contrasting learners' SLA in the example of 2 learners who have different intelligence preferences and find out whether learners' intelligence can impact on learners' SLA or not.*

**Keywords:** *Multiple intelligences, second language acquisition, cognitive process, interpersonal, intrapersonal, diversity, pre-test, post-test*

### **АННОТАЦИЯ**

*Было проведено множество исследований по вопросу о том, как людям удается овладеть иностранным языком. Многие ученые выдвигают различные эксперименты и гипотезы, надеясь выяснить, какие факторы помогают учащимся развить привычку к обучению или что заставляет их добиваться успеха в изучении языков. Поведенческая перспектива выдвинула теорию, относящуюся к основам обучения для всех существ; Когнитивный подход дал нам возможность понять трудности связи языка и мышления; и социокультурная перспектива убедила нас обратить внимание на социокультурные представления учащихся. В этом тематическом исследовании мы попытаемся проанализировать результаты, касающиеся множественного интеллекта, путем сравнения и сопоставления овладение вторым языком учащихся на примере 2 учащихся, которые имеют разные предпочтения в отношении интеллекта, и выясним, может ли интеллект учащихся влиять на овладение вторым языком учащихся или нет.*

***Ключевые слова:** множественный интеллект, овладение вторым языком, когнитивный процесс, межличностный, внутри личностный, разнообразие, предварительный тест, пост-тест.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

According to one of the linguists, who has made a huge contribution to the enhancement of linguistics, Brown, learning a second language is considered to be a task that is complex and as a language teacher we must know learner`s entry behavior, specify objectives, devise methods that we employ and design an evaluation procedure [1:92]. That's to say, the role of facilitator is to determine learners` behavior, strengths and suggest ways of finding answers to a problem and help them to reach their goals easily. Howard Gardner was one of the first linguists who developed the theory of multiple intelligences. His theory of multiple intelligences makes a huge emphasis on not how people are intelligent, but how their intelligence works. His findings helped us to determine the students` strength and find a special approach to them as they possess special intelligence distinguishing one another. It means that some of them can be good at mathematics and have a tendency to solve logical-problematic issues whereas others can demonstrate the strength in linguistics being able to use words in correct form and use language to express meaning. Several decades ago the diversity of teaching methods and approaches were not the same as they are now. We used to be taught in a traditional way where the main character of the study process was a teacher and the lessons were provided relying on one form of curriculum. Nowadays the process has totally changed and teachers with learner-centered lessons try to meet the requirements of all students.

## **DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

A number of scholars have proposed various concepts regarding Multiple Intelligences. The concept of intelligent quotient was firstly mentioned by Alfred Binet, psychologist and creator of Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales. This was the first intelligence test measuring the intelligence of people. Despite the fact that the proposed test revolutionized the world of psychology and is still used Binet himself didn't believe that his measurement could be used to measure all levels of intelligence and stressed out some limitations of the test by clarifying that intelligence is such a broad concept that can not be measured by a single test. Following Alfred in 1983, Howard Gardner made an effort to develop the theory and helped us to see why IQ is too simplistic a concept to account for a whole host of skills and abilities. Gardner suggested types of intelligences: Linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial,

bodily-kinesthetic, naturalist, interpersonal, intrapersonal. It was maintained that by looking only at the first two categories we rule out a great number of the human beings' mental abilities. And he showed that our traditional definition of intelligence is culture-bound [1:92].

Later Howards in his interview stated: "People are different from one another and rather than to force everybody to be logical which is what language logic does, it recognizes different ways learning and different ways showing what have understood...so, it's equalizing each kind of abilities...in English we don't mark cases, in other words "book" is "book" whether it is nominative or accusative in Latin you do mark cases. In order to explain cases to people, it is something where you can use logical intelligence, because it is a concept which would not be known to people. That's the place where you will have to figure out different ways in which you should present the concept which would be more familiar to people. But there is also the case where... it is not particularly conceptual, but there are vocabulary words to be learnt. There are lots of ways by which people can learn vocabulary. For some people oneway is better.... Some people want to read it, some people want to do it by ear, some people want to touch the material. Many people prefer to memorize vocabulary, other people do not, they just want to learn by reading in context. So, there's no point in forcing everybody to learn in the same way. Ultimately, they want to know vocabulary, that's important" [2].

Another linguist Robert Sternberg points out that there should be 3 types of intelligence which are practical, creative, and analytical. The 3 intelligences work together and assist individuals to get succeeded in particular socio-cultural contexts. Sternberg states: "Intelligence to be a skill in achieving whatever it is people want to attain in their socio-cultural context by capitalizing on strengths and compensating for, or correcting their weakness. It gives us a chance to comprehend that individuals` intelligence can help them to be successful in LA." [3]

While Binet, Gardner, and Sternberg were developing their concepts regarding Multiple intelligences, Daniel Goleman came up with a new concept in 1995. He States that individual's emotional intelligence (or EQ) is considered to be persuasive if we speak about intellectual functioning because it is our emotions which can control cognitive processing [4].

As a learner we need to be motivated and regulate our emotions. So, we can say that this is another concept to be considered while learning a second language. Despite the fact that Howard, Sternberg, and Goleman come up with different

approaches related to the amount and type of intelligence, all of them state that Intelligence can correlate successfully.

Other researchers agreeing with the impact of intelligence on SLA are Derakhshan and Maryam Faribi. In their research on the theme “Multiple Intelligences: Language Learning and teaching they made an effort to report the effects of multiple intelligences and teaching English. In their research they agreed with the fact that EFL teacher educators are not considered to be traditional teachers as they not only teach but also know about methods, testing theory and how to apply for lesson using diverse methods. Most teacher education programs include courses in all these subject areas. Teacher education programs are also expected to keep current by introducing teachers to the newest and most creative ideas in second language pedagogy. It is other evidence that students can succeed in learning languages. They are treated according to their intelligence preferences [5].

Svava Anna says: “The theory can change the way teachers and students think about learning. A simple test which shows intelligences students are strong in can really give them a new perspective. It can get them to change their attitude towards their own intelligence and learning and raise their self-esteem. For example, if a student learns that he is strong in Naturalistic Intelligence but doesn't excel in Logical-Mathematical Intelligence he can get a whole new perspective on his abilities and change his views about learning. He could practice his stronger intelligence and develop his weaker intelligence. I believe that it is very important for teachers to focus on students` strengths and the Multiple Intelligence theory can help with that.” [6].

The Multiple intelligences theory in English Teaching. Kenara Braud.) Svava`s ideas were supported by Phil Carter, another author of the book “the complete book of intelligent test” he states that “People can be intelligent in many different ways. It is completely wrong to write off or even put down someone who has scored badly in an IQ test which, after all, has only provided us with one type of information about that individual.” [7].

Having analyzed the contributions made by several linguists and psychologists I can say that MI plays a big role in learning languages. We would like to analyze the theory and impact of intelligence on SLA. As it is believed that learners with special and appropriate approach progress in language learning.

Learners` Profile: For this case study, to analyze the theory two ESL students studying at the 1` course of academic lyceum in the same group were chosen. Both of them have an interest in learning foreign languages despite the fact that they have

different preference on academic subjects. The students study at academic lyceum under UzSWLU, specialized in learning foreign languages. The students are between pre- intermediate and intermediate proficiency level and having intention to acquire a certificate with higher levels established by International English language testing system. For confidentiality purpose, each student will be renamed as follows: Student A and Student B.

The Student A is an ESL learner who has been learning English for 6 years having preference of learning languages and mathematics. When it comes to learning styles, the student needs to learn independently and then can apply to grasp it. Among academic subjects she is good at mathematics and physics. She has difficulty in Grammar of both L1 and L2. During the lessons the student makes more grammar mistakes as she tries to compare two different languages: Uzbek and English. The student seems to be introverted because she is shy and prefers not to participate in group-works and role plays.

The student B has been learning English for 8 years. Her communicative skills are developed as she has relatives living abroad and has a good chance to practice English. She is active in group-works, and her preferred subjects are literature and mother tongue. One of her challenges is mathematics as this subject has never been the student`s preferred subject. The student is sociable, open-minded and enthusiastic to help her groupmates during the lessons.

Both of the students are at the same age and study in one group. Moreover, despite the fact that the way they grasp content and the personality they have differ completely, they have a good friendly relationship with each other.

Research design: The procedure consists of 3 steps including an Interview, Pre-test1 and Post-test 1, Pre-test 2, and Post-test 2. The objectives of each procedure were as follows:

Interview-to get more information about learners` personality, emotional state, and intelligence preferences. Pre-test-to analyze the correlation of learners` IQ with SLA. Posttest-to analyze the impact of learners` IQ with SLA through vocabulary checking. In the interview part both Student A and Student B were individually asked some questions regarding to their studies, hobbies, family background. The interview was held in a relaxing atmosphere, in which students feel comfortable answering the questions about the challenges in their study process, preferences and social status.

Having had a conversation, we had a clear understanding about students` intelligence. However, to be more concrete we applied to Multiple Intelligences test to have exact results regarding to each student`s intelligence and at the end of the



interview each student was given Multiple intelligences test based on Gardner`s MI model. The whole process of the interview took each student approximately 20 minutes. Next stage was pre-test stage in which students were given different two worksheets including diverse tasks and activities which don`t meet their intelligences. For example, despite the fact that Student A has a logic-mathematical type of intelligence, she was given a handout which consists of tasks and activities suitable for students with linguistic and interpersonal preference or vice versa. The level and the theme of the topic is the same. The tasks had pre, while and post-tasks.

After two weeks, in Post-test 1 the students were checked based on the vocabulary which they had come across while doing the tasks. They were given a list of new words to which they should have to find definitions by themselves.

After 2 weeks the procedure was conducted again. In pre-test 2 the students were given other two different worksheets including different activities and tasks, but in this case the given tests were designed according to the type of students` intelligences. Again, in post-test 2 they were given tasks related to the vocabulary checking.

Data collection and findings: According to the results of interview, Student A has a mixed type of intelligence including logic-mathematical and visual intelligences. Moreover, the student prefers not to be distracted while learning something new. It is difficult for her to concentrate on the topic if she works in group. That`s to say, she has some elements of intrapersonal intelligence. One of her difficulties is to write essays. Despite the fact that she has a strong critical reading skill, it is challenging her to write essays due to her grammar skill. She has her own opinion on each issue and it can be difficult to persuade her to agree with group`s ideas if she disagrees. She has developed critical thinking and has an ability to see “the other side of a coin”. She can give good advice, but prefers not to ask for advice from her own group mates as she tends to analyze the outcomes of problems on her own. Student B enjoys reading, writing novels and discussing different issues in group which means her preference lies within linguistic and interpersonal intelligences. As she is sensitive to word functions and sound structures she tends to like writing essays, reflections and telling stories. The most difficult thing in her studying is to answer logical questions and working independently. She never feels uncomfortable to ask for a help if she has some difficulties both in her study process or in personal life. At the same time, she is always willing to help her groupmates during the lessons. Moreover, she knows how to motivate her friends.

Having analyzed the results of data, we began pre-test. We needed some more students as there were some tasks to be done in group. While doing the tasks both of the students seemed to be uncomfortable as they had difficulties in doing some tasks. After two weeks they had post-test 1 based on reviewing the words they came across in the pre-test 1. The results were as follows:

Student A could remember 15% of words whereas the percentage of vocabulary that Student B could remember made up 20%.

The outcomes mean that they couldn't remember the words in an effective way. After two weeks the procedure was conducted again. In Pre-test 1 both students were given other worksheets with the tasks and activities having the same level as the previous one. However, in this case both students were given tasks according to their intelligence preferences. For example, Student A was given a worksheet based on tasks which are considered to be suitable for learners with logic-mathematical intelligence whereas Student B was given one that is suitable for learners having linguistic intelligence. While doing the tasks some more students were needed for discussions. Both of the students felt comfortable with tasks and activities. After two weeks both of them were tested for vocabulary checking. The results were as follows:

Student A could do 75% of the test, and Student B could do 70% of the task. The results proved that intelligence of a learner can have an impact on learner's SLA.

## **CONCLUSION**

The main purpose of this study to find out whether there is any correlation between multiple intelligences and SLA. Based on the findings I can say that the theory of Multiple intelligences can change the way teachers think about their learners. We found out that MI plays a big role in remembering words. If teacher pay attention to every to their needs it can be easy and comfortable for students to learn foreign languages. That is to say, teachers manage to guide their learners to success. However, it is not advisable to design all lessons according to students' needs. Sometimes there should be some exceptions so that students can have a chance to develop the skill in which they have difficulty.

The next important objective was to analyze whether learners' emotional intelligences can also be beneficial and help learners to acquire a second language. As we know, while learning a foreign language learners tend "to experience" a new culture and open a new world. That's why they should be aware of where they are and where they are going, what difficulties may come across, how they can feel the people and the world around them. That's to say the development of emotional

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intelligence which includes self awareness, self regulation, self motivation is necessary.

Considering the results, I believe that both IQ and EQ can be one of the main factors that can help learners intending to acquire a second language.

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