FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION
RECEIVED 13.04.2014 ACCEPTED 11.06.2014 PUBLISHED 15.06.2014
DOI: 10.15550/ASJ.2014.08.296

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE THEORY IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: Serious stimulus to the creation of this article was the Decree of the President of Uzbekistan of December 10, 2012 “On measures to further improve foreign language learning system”, the aim of which to educate the intelligent, perfect, harmoniously developed person and to train the highly-qualified specialists. The decree is of great importance nowadays in our country as learning foreign languages will enable the skilled youth of Uzbekistan to strive for occupying a deserved place in world community. Indeed the factors stated above have reasons for creating new methods and technologies in teaching foreign languages based on national and worldwide pedagogical needs. Therefore the article is dedicated to the theory of multiple intelligences of Howard Gardner, which can be applied in teaching foreign languages in the Education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as it proposes nine different kinds of individual approaches to every learner. Besides the theory will assist educators in revealing learners’ strength and weakness in order to develop them during the learning process. This kind of approach will allow educators to teach foreign languages in one of many different ways (using songs, role plays, puppetry, stories, works of art, diagrams and etc.). Also the eastern scholars’ viewpoint about the term “intellect” is under review.

Keywords: foreign language, individual approach, multiple intelligences, linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, naturalistic intelligence, existential intelligence, learners’ intelligence.

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov signed a decree “On measures to further improve foreign language learning system” on December 10, 2012. In accordance with the decree, a comprehensive foreign language teaching system has been established, within the framework of Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On education” and the National Program for Training in the country, intended for creating highly educated, harmoniously developed, modern-thinking generation and further integration of the country to the world community.

Certainly during the years of independence a great deal of work carried out for the purpose of improving the system of foreign language teaching. All kinds of educational institutions were provided with electronic resources for learning foreign languages, mainly English, foreign language (English, German, French) multimedia tutorials and textbooks, and were equipped with language laboratories stand on the basis of ICT. But times are changing as well as people doing. Consequently, the role of an educator, in the age of digital technology, is transforming into a coordinator of information flow. Thus, it is necessary for the educator to modify his way of teaching in order to find the right method of approach to learner perceives objective reality. And it is natural that for this purpose the educator must have a range of skills, which are countless. However, the thing which is more essential is to understand the learner’s intelligence, i.e. to discover (grasp) in what direction he or she thinks.

So, what is intelligence in itself? A great number of prominent philosophers and scholars all over the world have been attempted to find an answer for centuries and are still in the process.

The word “intelligence” derives from the Latin verb “intelligere” which means to comprehend, perceive and understand. The entire approach to the study of the term was made by a great antique philosopher as Aristotle. Intelligence, according to Aristotle, was the mind when it apprehended the object of comprehension and the form that has neither matter nor sensuous representation and was one with mind. Later Aristotle’s viewpoints were developed by remarkable eastern philosophers like Al-Kindi “Philosopher of the Arabs”, Al-Farabi “The second Aristotle” and Avicenna (Ibn Sino).
Following al-Kindi, "... al-Farabi speaks of four faculties or parts of the intelligence: the potential or latent intelligence, intelligence in action, acquired intelligence, and the agent intelligence. The first is the ‘aql hayyulani, the passive intelligence, the capacity which man has for understanding the essence of material things by abstracting mentally that essence from the various accidents with which it is associated in perception, more or less equivalent to the "common sense" of Aristotle. The intelligence in action or ‘aql bi-l-fi'l is the potential faculty aroused to activity and making this abstraction. The agent intelligence or ‘aql fa’al is the external power, the emanation from God which is able to awaken the latent power in man and arouse it to activity, and the acquired intelligence or ‘aql mustafad is the intelligence aroused to activity and developed under the inspiration of the agent intelligence. Thus the intelligence in action is related to the potential intellect as form is to matter, but the agent intelligence enters from outside, and by its operation the intelligence receives new powers, so that its highest activity is acquired" (1922, p. 148-149).

As a result, the theory of these outstanding philosophers indicates that thousands years ago they believe in existence not only a single general intelligence, but several kinds of intelligences. Indisputably, the theory deserves to be in the case even at the present time, as it is still a matter of studying. Therefore, it is likely that on the basis of these theories, nowadays emerged the theory of multiple intelligences, the currently founder of which is Howard Gardner, a psychologist and Professor of education at Harvard University.

Howard Gardner, after years of research, proposed a new theory and definition of intelligence in his book entitled “Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences” in 1983, where he answered to the basic question which was: Is intelligence a single thing or various independent intellectual faculties?

In the heyday of the psychometric and behaviorist eras, it was generally believed that intelligence was a single entity that was inherited; and that human beings – initially a blank slate – could be trained to learn anything, provided that it was presented in an appropriate way. Nowadays an increasing number of researchers believe precisely the opposite; that there exists a multitude of intelligences, quite independent of each other; that each intelligence has its own strengths and constraints; that the mind is far from unencumbered at birth; and that it is unexpectedly difficult to teach things that go against early ‘naive’ theories of that challenge the natural lines of force within an intelligence and its matching domains. (Gardner, 1993)

Gardner defines intelligence as the ability to solve problems or to create products that are valued within one or more cultural settings. The definition was studied in a systematic, multi-disciplinary, and scientific manner, drawing from psychology, pedagogic, biology, neurology, sociology, anthropology and the arts and humanities. Thus, this resulted in the emergence of the “Theory of Multiple Intelligences”, which claims that:

– All human beings have a blend of nine various kinds of intelligences that reflect various ways of interacting with the world.
– Each person has a unique intellectual composition.
– Although all people have all nine intelligences, but no two individuals have them in the same exact configuration, similar to the fingerprints.
– Educators are able to improve education by addressing the multiple intelligences of the learners.
– These intelligences are located in different areas of the brain and can either work independently or together.

From the preceding conclusions, H. Gardner initially formulated a list of seven intelligences. The first two kinds of intelligences have been typically valued in schools, the next three are mostly associated with the arts, and the penultimate two are what H. Gardner called “personal intelligences”. His listing was preliminary, and subsequently he added two more intelligences (naturalist, existential):

1. Linguistic intelligence (word strong) involves sensitivity to oral and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to succeed in certain goals. It also includes the capacity to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically; and language as a means to remember information. Gardner sees writers, poets, lawyers and speakers among those who have high linguistic intelligence.

2. Logical-mathematical intelligence (math strong) includes the capacity to analyze problems logically, fulfils mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. In Howard Gardner’s view, it involves the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically. This kind of intelligence is mostly associated with scientific and mathematical thinking.

3. Musical intelligence (music strong) entails the ability to think in music and skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns. It deals with the ability to recognize and compose musical.
pitches, tones, and rhythms. According to Howard Gardner musical intelligence runs in an almost structural parallel to linguistic intelligence.

4. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (body strong) involves the potential of using one’s whole body or parts of the body to solve problems or create products. It is the capability to use mental abilities to coordinate bodily movements. Mental and physical activities are related in Gardner’s viewpoint.

5. Spatial intelligence (space strong) includes the ability for recognizing and manipulating the patterns of both wide spaces such as those negotiated by pilots or navigators, and confined spaces such as those experienced by architects, sculptors or championship chess players.

6. Interpersonal intelligence (people strong) is concerned with the capacity to detect and respond appropriately to the intentions, motivations and desires of other people. It enables people to work effectively with others. It is an ability which is necessary for everybody, but it is especially important for educators, salespeople, religious and political leaders and counselors.

7. Intrapersonal intelligence (self strong) consists of the capacity to be self-aware and to be in peace with one’s feelings, fears and motivations. In Howard Gardner’s viewpoint it includes having an effective working model of ourselves, and to be able to use such information to regulate our lives.

8. Naturalist intelligence (nature strong) as a person "who demonstrates expertise in recognition and classification of the numerous species – the flora and fauna – of her or his environment" (Gardner, 1998, p. 115).

9. Existential intelligence (thought strong) is the ability and proclivity to pose (and ponder) questions about life, death, and ultimate realities.

These intelligences, according to H. Gardner, are amoral, i.e. they can be lead constructive or destructive use. That is why the theory can be also applied by educators to build up learners’ productive attitude to education and be found in use within primary and secondary schools, lyceums and colleges, and higher educational institutions.

Hence, at first blush there can be arouse a question: It is hard to teach one intelligence; what if there are nine? It is hard to enough to teach even when anything can be taught (Gardner, 1983).

Educators should realize that these nine kinds of intelligences will allow them nine ways of teaching rather than one and to view their learners from nine multiple perspectives as well. Furthermore, the theory will assist them in seeking ways to reach those learners who don’t respond to traditional approaches. And this idea, reasonable enough on the surface, is that all learners have distinctive minds and personalities. Accordingly, it furthers an effort to educators to find out more about learners intellectual abilities and to teach them in methods that are appropriate, that they value, and, moreover, that are effective. Thus, those educators who understand the direction of their learners’ intelligence and use MI theory, and its relation to educational frameworks and explanations of diversity, will be converted into educators who understand human nature, human diversity and human learning at more comprehensive level, besides, will contribute in upbringing intellectual and spiritual, initiative and creative thinking generation with high moral qualities, who are the bright future of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

References