

A Multiple Intelligences Based-Teaching of English at University Level

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Abstract Multiple Intelligences Theory has attracted the attention of educators around the world for its great role in the field of education and other fields since 1980s. So teachers of English have applied the philosophy of such a theory in their classes at different levels for the sake of enhancing their students' learning and providing them with better learning environments. The importance of the present study lies in the fact that it is the first time to apply this theory in the context of Kurdistan universities/ Iraq. It is also important for both teachers teaching English as a foreign language and students learning English as a foreign language. Based on Multiple Intelligences Theory, the present study among other things aimed at teaching English grammar to undergraduate university students learning English a foreign language at the Department of English/ Faculty of Humanities/ University of Zakho/ Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The problem diagnosed by the researcher is that when teaching grammar to students, it is not related to other aspects of language especially writing., which made students face difficulties when writing essays due to the poor grammar they use, which in turn affects their messages they want to convey to their audience. To conduct the present study, the researcher has adopted an experimental research design for identifying the effect of Multiple Intelligences Theory on learners' achievement. 34 students (4th year, 13 males and 21 females) were chosen to participate in this experimental teaching program. Before starting the course, a pretest was administered to the students. Then, they were divided into two groups: control group which will be taught according to the curriculum prescribed by the Dept. and experimental group which will be taught according to Multiple Intelligences Theory. Each group consisted of 17 students. After 12 weeks of teaching both groups, a posttest was administered to the same groups After that, the scores obtained by both groups were analyzed using SPSS software. Two statistical analysis tools were used : independent t-test and paired samples t-test to test the null hypothesis against the data analyzed. Based on the results gained on posttest, the null hypothesis was rejected due to the significant difference in the mean scores at the level of 0.05.

Keywords: *Multiple Intelligences Theory, field of education, teachers of English, learning environment*

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1. Introduction

English language has largely attracted the attention, in Kurdistan Region, Iraq in the last decade of 21st century, of departmental and non-departmental university students, as well as other people of different ages outside the academic circle. This is due to the fact that English has become a prerequisite for applying for any job or joining any study program. As such, teachers of English as a foreign language at both governmental and nongovernmental schools, universities, and institutes face difficulties in getting their students learn effectively as they are unaware of students' different potentials including their learning preferences and intelligences. To make teaching methods at such educational institutions more effective, interesting, and fruitful, the present article aimed at enhancing students' skills especially in grammar and writing through the teaching some of grammatical topics based on Multiple

Intelligences Model. This is the first time that such model is used at Kurdistan universities, both governmental and non-governmental. Traditionally speaking, when teaching grammar, teachers do not take into consideration the link between grammar and other subjects. Based on that, they teach grammar for the sake of getting students memorize the rules and apply them in a decontextualized way without being aware of the importance of such knowledge to enhance their skills in other language areas especially writing. The evidence that proves this reality is the much suffering that teachers of literature as well as of writing skills undergo when rating their students' essays on the different literary topics. They complain much about the poor grammar students use in writing essays. The researcher believes that cooperative learning based on Multiple Intelligences Model will be successful in developing learners' writing skills compared to the traditional way of teaching. So the present study aimed at investigating the effect of Multiple Intelligences Theory on the learners' achievement in EFL classes.

1.1. Theoretical Background

Intelligence is defined as general cognitive problem-solving skills. It is a mental ability which involves perceiving, analyzing, reasoning, learning ...etc. Decades ago, it was believed that there was one fundamental general factor at the intelligence base (the g-factor: an expression used to quantify what is common to the scores of all intelligence tests. G is the abbreviation of "general intelligence factor"). Later, psychologists discovered that they were in need of more facts to determine better understanding about intelligence. Intelligence also means that what you do when you do not know what to do. Moreover, "intelligence is a hypothetical idea defined as being reflected by certain types of behavior" [1]. Traditionally, intelligence was conceived of as the ability to perform linguistic and logical mathematical problem solving. In response to this narrowed view of intelligence, the American Psychologist Howard Gardner originated the Theory of Multiple Intelligences for the first time in 1980s. He rejected the idea that intelligence is something inherited and cannot be changed. He proposed seven basic intelligences in the beginning, then he added an eighth namely, linguistic intelligence, logical mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and naturalist intelligence. Moreover, he questioned the validity of determining intelligence through the practice of getting individuals out of their natural learning environment and asking them to do tasks out of context. As an alternative to this view, Gardner suggested that intelligence has more to do with the capacity for (1) solving problems (2) fashioning products in a context- rich and naturalistic setting [2]. The contributions of MI model lie in the fact that all people have full range of intelligences; no two individuals are alike in having the same potential profiles because even if the genetic materials are identical, they have different experiences; and having a strong intelligence does not mean that one necessarily acts intelligently [3]. On the other hand, [4] summarized the cornerstones of MI model in the following points (1) everyone is intelligent in their own way (2) there are at least eight ways to be intelligent (3) intelligences combine and work together (4) everyone has each intelligence and (5) intelligences can develop and grow. Furthermore, he said that the heart of Multiple Intelligences Theory is that "everyone is clever". The admiring thing in Multiple Intelligences Theory lies in the fact that there is no right way to implement MI in the classroom. The implementation of Multiple Intelligences Theory varies from one school to another. For example, using MI at New City School is different from the way it is used at the Key School in Indianapolis, which is different from implementing it at Fuller School in Gloucester, Massachusetts, etc. Thus, each teacher or a group of teachers can use MI model in a way that meets their students' needs and fits their context of learning and culture [5]. Likewise, [4] said that Multiple Intelligences Theory is not a curriculum or a strategy, or a catch up program; but it is a philosophy that has been used in the classrooms all over the world since the eighties of 20th century. Richards and Rodgers [6] stated that MI model refers to a learner-based philosophy that characterizes

human intelligences as having multiple dimensions that must be acknowledged and developed in education. They also added that there is no syllabus prescribed or recommended in respect to MI model based language teaching. Nevertheless, there is a basic developmental sequence that has been proposed by Lazear (1991) (as cited in, [6]) to replace what is called a syllabus. Such a sequence consists of four stages: (1) awakening the intelligence (2) amplifying the intelligence (3) teaching with/for the intelligence and (4) transferring the intelligence. Since the rise of Multiple Intelligences Theory in the beginning of 1980s, different studies were conducted on different fields of education including EFL/ESL classes at different levels. Researchers in such studies investigated and tested the effectiveness and the role of this theory as being a crucial factor praised by educators around the world. For example, [7] investigated the Implications of Multiple Intelligences Theory in ELT field. They concluded that it is possible to motivate students in ELT classes through making use of the different intelligences and providing students with tasks and activities, which will affect their learning positively. In another study, [8] investigated the effect of grammar teaching on writing development. They found that there was little evidence that teaching grammar is effective. Moreover, they found that teaching sentence combining is more effective. They also suggested doing more research on the topic due to the insufficient quality of research available on the topic. In a different study, Madkour and Mohamed studied the impact of university students' multiple intelligences on their motivation and language proficiency. They found that traditional and ineffective teaching strategies focused on encouraging learners memorizing language rules were not helpful to make students proficient at language. On the contrary, being aware of their multiple intelligences profiles, the students managed to enhance their motivation, which was helpful to improve their language skills [9]. Derakhshan and Faribi studied the effect of Multiple Intelligences Theory on learning and teaching English. In the light of the different works they presented in their study, it was found that most of the researchers supported the role of Multiple Intelligences Theory as an effective factor in enhancing students' learning in any language area [10]. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson [11] stated that teachers who recognize the multiple intelligences of their students acknowledge that students bring with them specific and unique strengths, which are not taken into consideration by many teachers in the classroom situations. [11] further added that these intelligences are possessed by everyone; but they are not equally developed in any one individual. Some teachers try to provide their students with activities drawing on all eight intelligences to enable their students to realize their full potential with all intelligences. Doing so is to think of activities that can be used in the classroom and to categorize them according to intelligence type. Moreover, knowing which type of intelligence tapped by a particular activity will help teachers keep track of which type of intelligence is emphasized or neglected in the classroom and aiming for a different type if they need. They also mentioned a further way of teaching from multiple intelligence perspective, which is planning lessons so that the different intelligences can be represented. It is worth mentioning that not every

intelligence should be presented in every intelligence lesson plan. Some activities are chosen from Armstrong (2009) [2] to use in EFL classes for teaching MI. For example, brainstorming, reading, writing journals, storytelling, word games, worksheets, group discussions, peer editing, classification and categorizing videos, slides visual thinking exercises competitive and cooperative games, mood music, using background music, group brainstorming sessions, options for homework, nature videos, films, and movies, etc. for teaching linguistic intelligence; classification, categorizing and games, etc. for teaching logical- mathematical intelligence; imaginative storytelling, mind-maps, videos, movies, slides, etc. for teaching spatial/visual intelligence; body

maps, body answers, field trips, using body language, virtual reality software, etc. for teaching bodily-kinesthetic intelligence; mood music, playing recorded music, using background musical in the class, etc. for teaching musical intelligence; cooperative learning activities, group working, group brainstorming sessions, interpersonal interaction, etc. for teaching interpersonal intelligence; individualized projects and games, self-esteem activities, reflection activities, personal activities, etc. for teaching intrapersonal intelligence; and gardening, nature oriented software, nature study tools(binocular, telescope), nature videos, movies, films, nature walks, etc. for teaching naturalist intelligence, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Matching teaching some activities to the different types of intelligences in EFL classes

Activity	Intelligences involved
Brainstorming and thinking individually	Logical mathematical, spatial, intrapersonal, linguistic intelligences
Pair and group working, Interacting in the class	Interpersonal, linguistic, intelligence,
Reading a text by a student or by a teacher.	Linguistic intelligence
Words Games	Logical- mathematical, linguistic intelligence
Writing journals	Linguistic, intrapersonal intelligences
Doing assignment outside the classroom	Intrapersonal intelligences
Watching video, listening to music, background music	Musical intelligence, spatial intelligence
Using pictures	Spatial intelligence

(Adapted from [2]).

2. Research Design

The present study aimed at teaching English grammar to 4th year students at Department of English/University of Zakho/ Kurdistan Region/Iraq. 34 students participated in this course. Their ages vary from 22 to 25 years, upper intermediate level. This course consisted of 24 lessons on some grammatical topics based on the theory of Multiple Intelligences. The course lasted for 12 weeks, two hours per week. It aimed to enhance students' language skills especially in writing through teaching grammar among other things based on Multiple Intelligences Theory. Before starting the course, a pretest was administered to the 34 students, who were divided into two groups: experimental group that will be taught according to the Multiple Intelligence Theory and control group that will be taught by using the curriculum recommended by the Dept.. At the end of the course, both groups had a post-test to identify the effect of using multiple intelligences Theory on learners achievement in the experimental group. Then, learners scores on both tests were compared and analysed to see whether there is any difference in the mean scores at the level of 0.05. The reason behind this choice is that such students have taken courses on grammar in the preceding three years according to the curriculum prescribed by the Department of English. This course is a complementary to the previous ones. This made the program run more smoothly due to students' prior some knowledge of grammar. Based on that, the topics selected for this course are supposed to complete the ones covered in the preceding three years. The lessons deigned to be used in such a course were about Some English grammatical topics distributed over four years, and the topics include prepositions,, independent clauses, and concord (subject–verb agreement). Given the fact that the researcher himself taught English grammar to this group of students English grammar for the last three years,

he is aware of their preferences and intelligences. Moreover, to be more objective, the researcher has interviewed and explored the students in the experimental group to identify their dominant intelligences and preferences. This helped him prepare activities and tasks to teach in this course. Since the researcher aimed to help students improve their grammar skills to use in writing good essays, the students were asked to write an essay on any topic they choose using good grammar in the pretest and posttest. It is the researcher sincere believe that asking students to use the grammar they learned from classes will motivate them and get them interested in the lessons.

2.1. Developing Lesson Plans

The dominant model for lesson planning is that of Taylor 1949 which included four sequential steps: specifying objectives, selecting learning activities, organizing learning activities, and specifying models of evaluations. It is worth mentioning that this model is still used widely around the world. On his part, Taylor said (as cited in [12]) that when teachers plan for their lessons, they focus on the interests and needs of the students. On the other hand, an alternative model was developed by Yinger (1980) in response to Taylor's. This model (as cited in as cited in [12]) included also some stages. The first stage deals with problem conception in which planning starts with a discovery cycle of integration of the teacher's goals, knowledge, and experience. The second stage is about the problem formulation and a solution achieved. The last stage is implementing the plan with its evaluation.

Haynes said that planning a lesson is an essential part of having a successful process of teaching if such planning includes students' needs. In this respect, teachers should have a distinguishing role in adapting and adopting techniques and strategies in their lesson objectives [13]. Thus argued that an effective lesson starts with

appropriate and clearly written objectives. Furthermore, he also added that a lesson plan usually describes a destination we want our students arrive at not the journey. These objectives also enable teachers to evaluate what their students have learned at the end of the lesson [12]. Likewise, planning a lesson shows that a teacher has devoted time to thinking about the class. Hence, it suggests a level of professionalism and commitment to the kind of research students might expect. On the contrary, lack of planning might suggest negative attitudes students have about the teacher's professionalism. Planning also gives a lesson framework and an overall shape. Furthermore, creative teachers are flexible and responsive to what happens in the classroom in a creative way. It is important for teachers to think of a destination they want their students to reach and how to achieve that goal. Likewise, planning enables teachers to keep on the track in case they forget or distracted what they teach [14]. Similarly, Milkova said that a lesson plan is considered as a road map for teachers through which the knowledge they

reflect meet their students' needs. Setting a lesson, three principles should be taken into consideration namely, lesson objectives, teaching and learning activities, and strategies to check students' learning [15]. Similarly, planning a lesson will enable the teacher to have a clear image about the strategies to follow and the topics to cover in the lesson. It will also help students to achieve learning goals systematically [16]. Below a sample lesson is given in Table 2. The suggested sample lesson focus on teaching some English grammatical topics. They illustrate the different steps a lesson includes. Such steps include the topic of the lesson, the types of intelligences being focused on in the lesson see Table 2, the level of the students, time of the lesson, goals to achieve, teaching aids or materials, the procedures, techniques, and strategies to adopt in the lesson, assessment through which students will be checked to what extent they have received the knowledge delivered by the teacher, and the final step is the assignment given to students to ensure whether learning has been achieved or not.

Table 2. A Sample Lesson on Teaching Prepositions

Grammar Topic	English Prepositions
Suggested Multiple Intelligences focus	Logical –mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and linguistic intelligence
Level	Upper-Intermediate
Time	50 min
Goals	Enabling students to learn about prepositions through multiple intelligences
Teaching Aids	A notebook, whiteboard, textbook, rubric, journal
Procedure	1. Asking students to brainstorm writing as many prepositions as possible individually. 2. Asking them to read the prepositions they write and use them in meaningful sentences. 3. Asking them to classify the prepositions they write into time, place, and movement prepositions. 4. Analyzing and discussing the prepositions through pair working.
Assessment	1. Assessing students' knowledge of the materials learned in the class by discussing such prepositions through interacting. 2. Using a rubric including some items related to prepositions to be answered in the class.
Assignment	1. Asking students to write a paragraph about any topic they choose on the different types of prepositions. Then identifying and classifying the different types of prepositions. 2. Asking students to write a journal giving their feedback on the lectures by answering some questions related to the strategies and techniques use in the class.

2.2. Writing Journals

Besides the steps shown in the lessons mentioned above, the researcher developed a rubric (shown in Table 3) for writing journals as a tool for evaluating his teaching in the light of the feedback and reflections received from students This will help the researcher to adapt or change some strategies or techniques used in the lesson. The researcher believes that such a step will make students

more confident and motivated and they will feel that their roles have been considered by teachers. Thus, this will result in mutual trust, respect, and understanding between students and teachers. In return, goals will be achieved, and students will be provided with a good learning environment. Furthermore, it develops students' intrapersonal, linguistic, logical- mathematical, and interpersonal intelligences.

Table 3. A suggested rubric for writing journals

A Rubric for Writing a Journal	
Student's Name	
Student's Code	
Lesson Number	
Subject	
Date	
Dear student, could you give your reflection on this lecture by answering the following questions?	
1. What did you learn from this lesson?	
2. Were the techniques and methods used in the lesson useful for you to learn the subject?	
3. Do you think new techniques should be added to the already used ones?	
4. Do you think the exercises used in the lecture should be more difficult or they are OK?	
5. What is your impression of the lecture?	

2.3. Hypothesis

The present study adopted a null hypothesis that states: there is no statistically significant difference between students' mean scores on the posttest compared to those on the pretest.

3. Results

After teaching both groups for 12 weeks, the researcher analyzed the mean scores obtained on both pretest and posttest using the paired samples t-test and independent t-test. The mean scores and standard deviations obtained on both pretest and posttest in general for both groups were 48.5294, 8.66283 and 69.1176, 17.25348 respectively. Based on that, this means there was a significant increase in the mean scores obtained on the posttest compared to the mean scores obtained on the pretest, as shown in Table 4. In more details, mean scores and standard deviations obtained on the pretest for control group as well as for experimental group were 47.9412 and 9.69195; 49.1176 and 7.75308 respectively; whereas means and standard deviation obtained on the posttest for control group as

well as for experimental group were 54.4118, 10.28992 and 83.8235, 6.96631 as indicated in Table 5. P-value was 0.00. at the level of 0.05 This indicated that the mean difference was statistically significant at the level of 0.05 in favor of posttest. In other words, means Sig = .000, < 0.05, as indicated in Table 6. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected due to the significant difference in the mean scores of posttest compared to pretest.

Table 4. Mean scores and standard deviations for both groups in general

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretest	48.5294	34	8.66283	1.48566
posttest	69.1176	34	17.25348	2.95895

Table 5. Mean scores and standard deviations for both groups obtained on pretest and posttest

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
pretest	Control	17	47.9412	9.69195	2.35064
	Experimental	17	49.1176	7.75308	1.88040
Posttest	Control	17	54.4118	10.28992	2.49567
	Experimental	17	83.8235	6.96631	1.68958

Table 6. Levels of significance and mean difference gained on both pretest and posttest

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
pretest	Equal variances assumed	2.485	.125	-.391	32	.699	-1.17647	3.01022	-7.30809	4.95514
	Equal variances not assumed			-.391	30.528	.699	-1.17647	3.01022	-7.31970	4.96676
posttest	Equal variances assumed	.428	.517	-9.759	32	.000	-29.41176	3.01381	-35.55069	-23.27284
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.759	28.121	.000	-29.41176	3.01381	-35.58408	-23.23945

4. Discussion

Due to the techniques and strategies which the researcher adopted and/or adapted for conducting the present study, the participants of the experimental group performed a very good job. So they demonstrated a good performance in the classes as well as outside the classes. As mentioned earlier that the researcher has developed lesson plans for teaching this course to the experimental group. As a sample of a lesson shown in Table 2 will be demonstrated below: In the beginning I asked the students to brainstorm writing as many prepositions as possible. Then, I asked them to read what they wrote and use them in meaningful sentences. In the next step I asked them to classify them into prepositions of time, place, movement, passage, etc. and use them in meaningful sentences. After such classification, I asked the students to work in pairs and discuss what they have done. We see that through this process that the students have used different intelligences (see Table 1) in following the teacher's instructions in the class. Through such a process, I have noticed how motivated and active they were! Then, the interaction and general discussion between the teacher and the students took place to enhance students learning the different uses of prepositions. Given the fact that the participant had prior knowledge on writing skills, I asked them to write a paragraph on any topic as an assignment they were interested in using the different prepositions they

discussed in the class. The researcher thinks that this is a good technique to get the students link their grammar knowledge with writing. That is practicing their grammar knowledge in other aspects of language especially writing. The students were also asked to write a journal (see the sample rubric in Table 3) to give their reflection on the lesson they participated in. This enabled me as a teacher to modify and change some techniques and activities in the light of students' reflection and feedback. For example, some students asked me for more difficult tasks and activities, others were satisfied with the strategies and the styles of teaching. This technique motivated the students and gave them a role in running the class. In the following lecture, their writings was discussed and edited through peer editing under my supervision.

When the researcher graded students essays in the pretest, he identified and classified the mistakes made by the students. Majority of the mistakes were misusing of preposition, sentence structure, spelling mistakes, concord (subject –verb agreement), word order, and other parts of speech, etc. During the lessons, the researcher tried to find remedies for such mistakes in terms of practice, writing journals, assignments. The researcher found that reminding students of using grammar knowledge in writing was a good way to enhance their learning. This was clear in the given feedback and reflection in te journals they wrote.

Concerning the results arrived at in the present study, the participants showed better performance in the posttest

compared to the pretest, see Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6. For example, the mean scores and standard deviations obtained by both groups in the pretest in general were 48.5294, 8.66283 respectively; whereas the mean scores and standard deviations obtained by both groups on the posttest in general were 69.1176, 17.25348 respectively. This showed an increase in the mean scores on the posttest compared to the pretest, see Table 4. As far as the difference in the mean scores of control and experimental group is concerned, we see that experimental group showed better performance than control group. For example, the mean score obtained by the control group on the pretest was 47.9412; whereas on the posttest was 54.4118. The mean score obtained by the experimental group on the pretest was 49.1176; whereas on the posttest was 83.8235. Both groups made a change in the mean scores on the posttest compared to the pretest, but experimental group was much better than the control group on the posttest due to the philosophy of Multiple Intelligences applied in the classes taught to the experimental group. This supported and proved the effective and crucial role of Multiple Intelligences Theory in enhancing students' learning and motivation. According to t-test analysis of both pretest and posttest, we see that P-value 0.00 was less than 0.05. So the mean difference was significant at the level of 0.05. (Sig=0.00, $\alpha < 0.05$) in favor of the experimental group, as indicated in Table 6. The results reported in the present study were in agreement with other studies conducted on teaching and learning language, see [7,8,9,10].

5. Conclusion

The results arrived at in the present study showed that there was a slight difference between the mean scores obtained by the control group on the pretest and on the posttest. On the pretest, it was 47.9412; whereas on the posttest, it was 54.4118. On the contrary, the mean scores obtained by the experimental group on both the pretest and posttest showed a significant difference. On the pretest, it was 49.1176; whereas on the posttest, it was 83.8235, see Table 5. In other words, teaching based on Multiple Intelligences had a positive impact on the performance and learning of students in the experimental group. The mean scores obtained by the experimental group was statistically significant the level of 0.05. Since P-value was 0.00, it was less than 0.05 (Sig=0.00, $\alpha < 0.05$) in favor of the experimental group, see Table 6. Thus, the null hypothesis set at the beginning of the study was rejected.

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