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Is there any statistically significantly relationship between reading comprehension via storytelling of male elementary students and their dominant multiple intelligence(s)?

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ABSTRACT

Not many studies have so far quantitatively investigated the role of multiple intelligences (MI) in language teaching and almost research has explored the role of MI in listening proficiency. In this study we worked on them too. The purpose of this research study were to investigate whether there was a relationship between each component of multiple intelligences and listening proficiency among Iranian Damavand university students to find those components of multiple intelligences which act as the predictor of listening proficiency among Damavand university students. In so doing, 30 juniors and 20 sophomores took part. Listening test was used for the purpose of homogenization and organization of the participants. After wards, the participants received the multiple intelligence inventory questionnaire then. All necessary instruction were given to the participants and the data were analyzed and coded in spss. Quantitative results indicated that there was no significant correlation between multiple intelligences and listening proficiency in this study.

Introduction

Application of MI in language education has started from 1967 in Project Zero with the goal of education for deep understanding (Gardner, 1999) though there are still few aspects which have undergone extensive research. One of the unexplored areas in language learning and teaching is the degree to which MI has influenced on reading comprehension of young male EFL students via storytelling.

Multiple intelligences (MI) is a theory of intelligences put forth by Gardner who viewed "intelligences as the ability to solve the problems or to create fashion products that are valued in one's own culture or society" (Gardner & Hatch, 1989, p.4). Gardner (1983) proposes that every individual poses at least eight different intelligences: bodily/kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, logical/mathematical, musical, spatial/visual, and naturalist.

There are many studies which have applied MI theory in EFL classrooms (e.g., Christison, 1996; Coban&Dubaz, 2011; Furnham, 2001; Mohammad, 2005; Pour-Mohammadi, Zainol Abidin& Bin Yang Ahmad, 2012; Sai & Hsu, 2007; Saricaoğlu&Arikan, 2009; Shangarffam&Zand, 2012).Among them, some confirmed positive relationship between MI and skill which was discussed (e.g. Christison, 1996; Coban&Dubaz, 2011; Mohammad, 2005; Sai & Hsu, 2007;Shangarffam&Zand, 2012). Christison (1996) remarked the positive relationship between teaching and multiple intelligences and opened a new window to the teachers and researchers in this area. Coban and Dubaz (2011) confirmed the positive relationship between multiple intelligences based on active learning and effective and permanent learning outcomes and also psychological matters in music classes. They suggested that music classes and materials based on multiple intelligences should be provided for teachers. On the other hand, schools and administrations should support multiple intelligences approaches even in public schools. Mohammad (2005) reported many benefits to the MI based training classes such as: providing positive environment for learners and opportunities to learn. Furnham (2001) reported positive relationship though he claimed that the relationship is gender-specified. Shangarffam and Z and (2012) investigated the relation between communicative strategies with a focus on multiple intelligence. They suggested using both communicative strategies along with multiple intelligences would be beneficial. On the other hand, some claimed that no or negative relationship has been found out (e.g.,Saricaoğlu&Arikan, 2009). Saricaoğlu &Arikan (2009) found out that there are negative relationships between success in students' test scores in grammar and bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, and intrapersonal intelligences whereas the relationship between musical intelligence and writing was found to be significant and positive. The results supported the remarks by Richard and Rodgers (2001) who claimed that "there are aspects of language such as rhythm, tone, volume and pitch that are more closely linked, say, to a theory of music than to a theory of linguistics."Pour-Mohammadi et al. (2012) suggested that learning environment with inactive use of multiple intelligences could have negative or weak relationship between multiple intelligence and English language achievement. The importance of teachers' knowledge and its improvement to exploit learners' multiple intelligences could be a practical implication of this study.

There are many studies which have applied MI theory in ESL classroom (e.g., Christison, 1996; Cluck & Hess, 2003; Haley, 2001; Loori, 2005; Nobel, 2004).Among them, some confirmed positive relationship between MI and skill which was discussed (Christison, 1996; Cluck & Hess, 2003; Haley, 2001; Nobel, 2004). Loori (2005) claimed that the application of intelligences is gender-specific.

Storytelling is a new concept in teaching and learning foreign languages. It has been used from past to now.

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Storytelling is a creative art form that has entertained and informed across centuries and cultures (Fisher, 1985).Findings of studies utilizing storytelling as cited from Nazir Atta Alla (2012) showed that storytelling enhanced the integration of language skills (Egan, 2005; Sadik, 2008; Tsou, Wang, &Tzeng, 2006), developed language abilities, (Colon-Vila, 1997; Houston, 1997), improved students' listening comprehension (Neugebauer& Currie-Rubin, 2009; Verdugo & Belmonte, 2007), improved students' reading comprehension and inferential skills (Craig, Hull, Haggart, & Crowder, 2001), built vocabulary (Bishop & Kimball 2006; Kuyvenhoven, 2009; Neugebauer& Currie-Rubin, 2009), enhanced grammar learning (Taylor, 2000; Wajnryb, 2003), developed students' literacy (Brand & Donato, 2001), developed oral language skills (Neuman, 2006; Sadik, 2008), improved students' writing skills (Ballast, Stephens, & Radcliffe, 2008; Gakhar& Thompson, 2007), enriched students' learning experience (Xu, Park, &Baek, 2011), encouraged students to express their ideas and thoughts (Lee, 2005; Shin & Park, 2008), helped students develop competence with print literature (Roney, 2009), empowered students' critical and visual thinking (Gakhar& Thompson, 2007; Myatt, 2008), and improved social interactions and language outcomes (Maier & Fisher (2007).

Not only is reading comprehension a Cinderella skill, but also it is God father in language skills since it has been much importance. Unfortunately, it is often neglected till the tertiary levels.Most emphasis has been put on reading in elementary levels not on reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is one of the aspects of reading. Many researchers have confirmed the facilitating role of reading in development of cognition and reading comprehension (e.g., Cipielewski&Stonovich, 1992; Cunningham, 1992; Krashen, 2004; Lee, 2005a, b, 2007; Wang,2007).There are many studies which investigated the relationship between MI and reading comprehension (e.g., Fitzgerald & Spiegel, 1983; Gaines & Lehmann, 2002; Gens, Provance, Van Duyne& Zimmerman, 1998; Kuzniewski, Sanders, Smith, Swanson &Urich, 1998; Pamela, 2003). Among them, some confirmed positive relationship between MI and skill which was discussed (Gaines & Lehmann, 2002; Kuzniewski et al., 1998; Pamela, 2003).Prior studies revealed that some minimal evidence indicates that as compared to poorer readers, better readers show greater sensitivity to structural features of stories (e.g., Fitzgerald, in press; Smiley, Oakley, Worthen, Campione, & Brown, 1977; Vipond, 1980; Weisberg, 1978 cited in Fitzgerald & Spiegel, 1983).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between the MIs and reading comprehension via storytelling of young EFL Iranian students. As Pardo (2004) stated to improve reading comprehension teachers should teach decoding skills, build fluency, build prior knowledge, motivate and engage students with text. Skillful readers use prior knowledge, make connections, visualize infer, ask questions, determine importance and synthesize the materials that they read (Grimes, 2004).Considering these facts, the researcher has tried to apply MI theory in classroom to investigate the result of engaging students via their dominant intelligences on reading comprehension.

Significance of Study

This study aimed at investigating a relationship between storytelling based on MI theory which might increase reading comprehension of learners. Less attention has been paid to reading comprehension of children though MI practices in children classroom would be more applicable than adults' classes because they are more likely to play with language than adults are, and enjoy language games. They also enjoy rhythmic and repetitive language more than adults do, and are more likely to be willing to sing and to participate in dramatic activities (Peck, 2001).Most teachers teach foreign languages in the same way in different classes though language learners are unique and special and also different in many aspects from each other, thus teachers have applied multiple intelligences in the classroom. Teachers are getting better aware of the fact that students bring specific strengths, unique learning styles, and different learning potentials to the class though most of them find it to difficult to face. EFL activities and assessments based on MIs theory could advance the teachers in teaching. Armstrong (2000) remarked the fact that theory helps teachers to make decisions on the most effective ways of teaching and learning tools and goes beyond the traditional methods common in different educational systems. If it can be shown that EFL learners comprehend better via storytelling based on MI theory teachers will consider the MI as an important drive in classrooms and will widely use it.

Methodology

Participants

The population from which the participants of study were chosen consisted of 60 male EFL learners from NooreDanesh primary school who were either at fourth or at fifth grade, and their age range was between 10 and 14.The mentioned age was used according to three different MIDAS tests which are different for different ages. Two of the MIDAS tests are assigned to kids. From them, one is appropriate for children at the age 10-14.The researcher chose the available students. Consent letters were collected from 60 students signed by their parents showing their agreement. At the beginning of the experiment, the participants were told that they would receive free story books and treatment sessions after school time as an incentive to encourage them to participate in the research actively.

Instrumentation

The instruments utilized in this study included (a) Multiple Intelligences Development Assessment Scale (MIDAS) for children (aged 10-14) to find the dominant intelligence of learners belonging to 10-14 age group (see Appendix A for a copy of MIDAS-KIDS) (b) YLE as a means of estimating the participating level of proficiency (see Appendix B for a copy of YLE) (c) Pretest and posttest in written form (Appendices C & D).Each of them is explained below:

YLE Starters

YLE Test as a placement test was held to examine the language ability of participants (see Appendix B).YLE was administered to 60 young male learners and those who received above 64 were accepted to participate in the research. The reliability coefficients for YLE test was.732 which showed an acceptable reliability index for the test.

Multiple Intelligences Development Assessment Scale (MIDAS)

A Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scale (MIDAS) designed by Shearer (1996) for kids (10-14) was utilized to assess the multiple intelligences of the learners (see Appendix B).The researcher used the translation of MIDAS which was translated, piloted and used by the related work (BahramiNejad, 2005).The reliability of the original MIDAS has been supported fully in the relevant works (e.g., Akbari&Hosseini, 2003; Shearer, 1996; Zohourian, 2009); however, BahramiNejad (2005) examined the reliability of translated version as well.

Posttest

A posttest in the form of multiple-choice reading comprehension test was administered to assess the reading comprehension ability of the participants after the experiment. It consisted of 15 questions, five on each story.

Treatment

During 3 treatment sessions, 3 storybooks which were chosen from level one Penguin Active Reading were used. The titles of the books were: *Amazon Rally*, *The Barcelona Game* and *The Wrong Man*, each containing 300 words. In each session, the teacher told a story for half of the class time (45 minutes) and for the other half of the class time, asked the students to perform the story for the rest of class. After the third session, all the participants were asked to participate in the posttest.

Results

In order to test the null hypothesis, the researcher used Pearson correlation to find out if there is a relationship between the participants' MI and their reading comprehension ability. Table 1 indicates the descriptive statistics for the two tests and Table 2 presents the results of the correlation analysis.

Table 1. ***Descriptive Statistics for the Two Tests***

	Mean	SD	N
reading	8.40	2.111	30
MI	13.27	2.518	30

Table 2. ***The Results of the Correlation Analysis***

		reading	MI
reading	Pearson Correlation	1	.849**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
MI	Pearson Correlation	.849**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

As it can be in seen in Table 2, the amount of correlation (r=.849) is significant at the probability level of.000 which shows a highly significant amount. In other words, MIs of the participants in this study are highly correlated with their reading comprehension abilities. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that, "there is no statistically significant relationship between reading comprehension via storytelling of male elementary students and their dominant multiple intelligence(s)" can safely be rejected.

Discussion

Learners take part in learning process in different ways: seeing, writing, acting, hearing, reasoning logically, and etc. Snow (1982) argues that since there is a close relationship between intelligence and education, educational policy and actual management of schools have always been affected by how intelligence is viewed. Traditionally, intelligence has been defined in terms of intelligent quotient (IQ), measuring linguistic and logical- mathematical abilities. In this regard, Armstrong (2000) maintains that since such schools do not serve the academic and career needs of many students whose strengths are out of these two intelligences, Gardner proposed a major transformation in schools in which teachers should present their lessons in a variety of ways, using music, cooperative learning, art activities, role playing, multimedia, field trips, inner reflection, and much more. One of these ways is storytelling which has been engaged human with fantasy and stories.On the other hand, De Las Casas (2008) states that there are many ways to impact education. Reading comprehension, vocabulary, concentration, language development, and oral communication skills can be built through storytelling. Hostmeyer and Kinsella (2010) reemphasized the fact that storytelling can improve reading comprehension as the learners listen to stories. The importance of individual needs and the fact that learners learn differently in different classes was a necessity to apply multiple intelligences theory into storytelling.

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between reading comprehension via storytelling of male elementary students and their dominant multiple intelligences in three groups of kinesthetic, linguistic and visual/spatial intelligence. According to the results of study which presented in chapter IV, the researcher was able to find answers to the hypothesis: There is no statistically significant relationship between reading comprehension via storytelling of male elementary students and their dominant multiple intelligence(s).Therefore, in this section, answers to the research and hypothesis will be discussed.

In order to fulfill the purpose of the present study,. measuring research instruments, all validated, were used: YLE Starters, MIDAS, and the subjects of this study were sixty male young learners of NooreDanesh School. The subjects were between 10 to 14 years old.In the first step, the translated kids' version was administered and the eight different scores for the eight intelligences were obtained. The second step of the procedure was the administration of the English proficiency test, YLE starters, It is also noteworthy to mention that, according to the instruction of YLE starters, the speaking module was measured holistically by two raters; the intra-rater and inter-rater reliabilities were run to ensure the reliability of measuring. The data gathered from YLE Starters Test and MIDAS Test went through different statistical analyses. Learners who obtained 64 and above in YLE Starters test were chosen in this study. The results of MIDAS Test showed that most frequencies were related to the kinesthetic, visual/spatial and linguistic intelligences. In the third phase pretest was administered. Afterwards, in the 7 treatment sessions 3 storybooks were told.In the last session, posttest was administered. The data gathered and were analyzed by running ANCOVA. The results indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between reading comprehension via storytelling of male elementary students with kinesthetic, visual/spatial and linguistic as the dominant intelligence. The results will be discussed in the conclusions part in details.

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