UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES AND READING PROFICIENCY OF IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES AND READING PROFICIENCY OF IRANIAN EFL STUDENTS

By

KARIM HAJHASHEMI

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, University Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts

October 2010
to my inspiring father,

to my loving mother,

my supporting siblings, and

my cute and handsome nephews Ali & Pouya
The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between multiple intelligences (MI) and reading proficiency of Iranian EFL pre-university students in Tehran, Iran and to see if gender plays a role in this regard. Specifically, the study attempted 1) to verify the intelligences identifiable among high/low achievers in reading, 2) to discover the differences in multiple intelligences of Iranian EFL students based on their reading proficiency and gender, 3) to determine the relationship between the multiple intelligences and reading proficiency of Iranian EFL students, 4) to identify the components of multiple intelligences which are correlated with the score of reading proficiency test of Iranian EFL students, and 5) to find the intelligence type that is the best predictor of learners’ performance in reading proficiency test. In order to meet the objectives, four research questions were asked. A descriptive and ex post facto design
was employed to ascertain relationships among the naturally occurring variables. The participants for this study were 128 pre-university students (grade 12, 18-19 years old) of both genders studying in Tehran in the academic year 2008-2009. The district was chosen randomly among 19 school districts of Tehran. The students were chosen randomly from two different segregated high schools in that region. Random sampling was used to create homogeneous groups without involving any potential biases or judgments. Three instruments were utilized in this study namely, 1) a demographic questionnaire; 2) the Persian version of McKenzie’s MI Inventory; and 3) a standardized reading proficiency test which was selected from retrieved paper-based TOEFL® tests.

Analyzing the data using $t$-test, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean musical-rhythmic intelligence scores of the low achievers and the high achievers. This means that there were no significant differences between intelligence types of the students and their reading proficiency scores except for their musical-rhythmic intelligence which was positive and stronger among the low achievers. Based on this, it seems that the high achievers have a lower musical intelligence, which also means that better readers are less intelligent ‘musically’. A statistically significant difference between the mean bodily-kinesthetic intelligence scores and the two genders was also revealed. In other words, no significant gender difference was found in the intelligence types of the students except their bodily-kinesthetic intelligence which was positive and stronger among the females. No significant difference was found between
the male and female Iranian EFL pre-university students in their reading proficiency scores.

Results obtained from the correlation analysis revealed no significant relationship between the two variables of MI and reading score. Based on Guilford’s rule of the thumb, the relationship of MI and reading scores in the present study was found to be negligible. Furthermore, the results of the correlation analysis revealed that there was a low significant, negative relationship between musical-rhythmic intelligence and reading which suggests that when the reading score of a student increases, musical-rhythmic intelligence of the same student decreases and vice versa. This finding indicates that the low proficiency EFL learners’ reading comprehension performance is related to the musical-rhythmic intelligence.

Overall, three categories of MI were found to be predictive of reading proficiency. Those significant predictor variables were musical-rhythmic, verbal-linguistic, and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences. The coefficient of determination $R^2$ of the variables (musical-rhythmic, verbal-linguistic, and bodily-kinesthetic) showed that these variables contributed 13.5% of the variance in reading proficiency collectively.
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sastera

HUBUNGAN ANTARA KECERDASAN BERGANDA (MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES) DAN KECEKAPAN MEMBACA DI KALANGAN PELAJAR EFL IRAN

Oleh

KARIM HAJHASHEMI

Oktober 2010

Pengerusi: Prof. Madya Wong Bee Eng, PhD
Fakulti: Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mempelajari hubungan antara multiple intelligences (MI) dan kemahiran membaca dikalangan mahasiswa pra-universiti EFL di Teheran, Iran serta mengetahui hubungkait faktor jantina dalam kajian ini. Secara khususnya, kajian ini cuba 1) mengesahkan kecerdasan yang boleh dikenalpasti antara pelajar yang cemerlang dengan pelajar yang lemah 2) membezakan kecerdasan penggandaan di kalangan pelajar EFL Iran berdasarkan kecekapan membaca dan jantina, 3) menentukan hubungan antara kecerdasan majmuk dengan keupayaan membaca pelajar EFL Iran, 4) mengenalpasti komponen kecerdasan majmuk yang berkorelasi dengan skor pembacaan ujian kemahiran daripada pelajar EFL Iran, dan 5) mencari faktor MI sebagai prediktor terbaik untuk prestasi pelajar dalam ujian kemahiran membaca. Empat soalan kajian telah dikemukakan

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prestasi kemahiran membaca pemahaman di kalangan penuntut EFL yang berprestasi rendah adalah berkaitan dengan kecerdasan muzikal. Selain itu, 3 kategori MI tersah berkaitan dengan kemahiran membaca. Prediktor pemboleh ubah yang signifikan itu ialah “muzikal”, “lisan” dan “kecerdasan kinestetik”. Koefisien determinasi $R^2$ daripada pembolehubah (muzikal, lisan, dan kinestetik) menunjukkan bahawa pembolehubah-pembolehubah ini menyumbang 13.5% daripada varians dalam kemahiran membaca.
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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on (October 2010) to conduct the final examination of Karim Hajhashemi on his thesis entitled “Relationship between Multiple Intelligences and Reading Proficiency of Iranian EFL Students” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Arts.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institutions.

__________________________
KARIM HAJHASHEMI

Date: 19 October 2010
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