



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***INTEGRATION OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES THEORY BY
FORM FOUR ESL SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS
IN MALAYSIA***

SENAM KAUR D/O SARJIT SINGH

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By

SENAM KAUR D/O SARJIT SINGH

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

October 2015

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DEDICATION

Daddy, this was your dream, and the rest too, Mum, Kiren, Gurmeet, Manmant, Harvinder, Ravinder, Vickermajeet, Elizabeth, Maria, Annabelle, Simran, Anmol and Darshan



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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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October 2015

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Faculty : Educational Studies

The Multiple Intelligences theory is stipulated in the Curriculum Specification of the New Integrated Secondary School Curriculum as it advocates personalized learning because it takes into consideration the varying human intelligences and all the combinations of intelligences. Hence, by having lessons that catered to the students' differing combinations and levels of intelligences, teachers will be able to reach individual students and help them hone their dominant intelligences and at the same time strengthen the weaker intelligences.

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the integration of the Multiple Intelligences theory by Form Four ESL Secondary School teachers. The study was guided by three research questions: (1) Is the Multiple Intelligences theory reflected in the teachers' English as a Second Language lessons? (2) What are the most frequently used intelligences in the English as a Second Language classroom? (3) What are the challenges of integrating the Multiple Intelligences theory in the English as a Second Language classroom? Three Form Four ESL teachers were purposefully selected to participate in this study. The participants were trained secondary school teachers teaching in a day school in Cameron Highlands, Pahang. The study employed a qualitative methodology and the data were collected through a Multiple Intelligences Checklist, interviews and classroom observations to obtain the teachers' perceptions, experiences and practices related to the study. 5 principles derived from the literature review were used as a guide to explore the integration of the Multiple Intelligences theory in these teachers' classrooms. They were (1) recognizing the multiple intelligences in teachers and students, (2) integrating multiple intelligences in the lesson, (3) providing opportunities to use multiple intelligences, (4) assessments that enable students to use their multiple intelligences to portray their understanding of the lesson instead of the paper-and-pencil test, (5) encourage apprenticeship to enable students to master a valued skill gradually under the tutelage of a professional.

The study revealed that (1) two of the teachers recognized their students' multiple intelligences aptly, (2) students' multiple intelligences were engaged especially during the set-induction but the verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences were dominantly used during the while and post-learning stage as the teachers were bound to the text book, (3) only one teacher provided her students opportunities to use their multiple intelligences for student projects, (4) drama was used as a multiple intelligences assessment by one teacher, and (5) all three teachers used apprenticeship to enhance their students' multiple intelligences. Based on these findings, recommendations for the integration of the Multiple Intelligences theory and further studies are provided.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**MENGINTEGRASIKAN TEORI PELBAGAI KECERDASAN DALAM
PENGAJARAN BAHASA INGGERIS SEBAGAI BAHASA KEDUA DI
KALANGAN GURU TINGKATAN 4 DI MALAYSIA**

Oleh

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Pengerusi : Profesor Madya Arshad Abdul Samad, PhD
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Teori Pelbagai Kecerdasan merupakan satu elemen yang diberi penekanan di dalam Huraian Sukatan Pelajaran Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah kerana ia menggalakkan pembelajaran yang memberi fokus kepada kepelbagaian kecedasan pelajar. Dengan cara ini, guru-guru dapat menyediakan pembelajaran efektif yang berpusatkan pelajar dengan mengambil kira kepelbagaian kecerdasan pelajar.

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji cara bagaimana guru-guru Tingkatan 4 mengintegrasikan Teori Pelbagai Kecerdasan dalam matapelajaran Bahasa Inggeris Sebagai Bahasa Kedua. Kajian telah dijalankan berasaskan tiga soalan: (1) Adakah Teori Pelbagai Kecerdasan diintegrasikan dalam pengajaran guru dalam Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua? (2) Apakah kecerdasan yang sering digunakan dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua? (3) Apakah cabaran yang dihadapi oleh guru dalam menggunakan Teori Pelbagai Kecerdasan dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua? Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan sebagai pendekatan penyelidikan kerana dianggap paling sesuai dengan soalan dan tujuan kajian. Tiga guru Tingkatan 4 telah dipilih melalui proses persampelan purposif berkriteria. Peserta merupakan tige guru terlatih yang mengajar di sebuah sekolah harian di Cameron Highlands. Data dikumpulkan melalui senarai semak, sesi temubual dan pemerhatian guru dalam kelas untuk mendapatkan persepsi, pengalaman dan praktis yang berkaitan dengan kajian ini. 5 dapatan dari tinjauan literatur di guna sebagai panduan dalam mengkaji pengintegrasian teori ini dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris sebagai Bahasa Kedua. Mereka adalah (1) mengenal pasti kepelbagaian kecerdasan dalam guru-guru dan pelajar-pelajar, (2) mengintegrasikan teori pelbagai kecerdasan dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran, (3) menyediakan peluang kepada pelajar untuk menggunakan kepelbagaian kecerdasan mereka, (4) menjalankan pentaksiran kepelbagaian kecerdasan untuk membolehkan pelajaran menunjukkan kefahaman pengajaran selain dari ujian bertulis, (5) menggalakkan 'apprenticeship' untuk memperkukuhkan kekuatan kecerdasan pelajar dibawah penyeliaan seorang professional.

Dapatan menunjukkan (1) dua orang guru dapat mengenal pasti kepelbagaian kecerdasan pelajar mereka secara tepat, (2) kepelbagaian kecerdasan pelajar digunakan semasa set induksi tetapi aktiviti-aktiviti semasa dan 'post-learning' menunjukkan dominasi kecerdasan linguistic dan logical matematik kerana guru-guru menggunakan buku teks sebagai aktiviti mereka, (3) hanya seorang guru sahaja yang menyediakan peluang untuk pelajar-pelajar menggunakan kepelbagaian kecerdasan menerusi projek pelajar, (4) drama digunakan sebagai pentaksiran kepelbagaian kecerdasan, dan (5) ketiga-tiga guru menggunakan 'apprenticeship' untuk memperkasakan kepelbagaian kecerdasan pelajar. Berdasarkan dapatan kajian ini, cadangan pengintegrasian secara efektif dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran dan juga cadangan untuk kajian seterusnya juga telah diajukan.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 23 October 2015 to conduct the final examination of Senam Kaur a/p Sarjit Singh on her thesis entitled "Integration of Multiple Intelligences Theory by Form Four ESL Secondary School Teachers in Malaysia" 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 Doctor of Philosophy.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The English language was brought into the then Peninsular Malaya by the traders of the British East India Company in the early nineteenth century (Vethamani, 2007:1). Since then, the English language had established itself in Malaysia. During the British colonialism, the English language was used extensively. It was used in administration and commerce as well as the medium of instruction in English-medium schools. Thus, English played the role of an official language during the British reign.

However, after Malaysia gained its independence in 1957, the importance of the English language changed gradually (Parilah Mohd Shah, 1999:273). The use and standard of the English language declined while the Malay language was upgraded. The Malay language is now the country's official and national language where it is used as the medium of instruction in schools and universities as well as administration. Yet, the English language remained an important language because of its position as an international and global language (Crystal, 1997; Pennycook, 1994). As such, the English Language has been accorded the status of the second most important language in Malaysia. It is being taught in Malaysian primary and secondary schools. The students are taught "300 minutes of English per week in Phase I, 270 minutes in Phase II in primary schools and 175 minutes per week in secondary schools" (Asiah Abu Samah, 2001: 236).

The position of the English language in Malaysia was determined by the government's policies. The National Educational Policy saw the renaming of former Malay-medium schools as national schools and schools using other media of instructions were known as national-type schools (Razak Report, 1956). This policy ensured that the English language will be taught in Malaysia (Asmah Haji Omar, 1992). It became the second language in Malaysia. However, the position of the English language was at stake with the implementation of the Rahman Talib Report (1960). This report recommended that the English language as the medium of instruction was to be phased out and replaced with the national language (Foo and Richards, 2004). Hence, the English language was taught as a single subject and students were exposed to the language only during the English language lessons (Asiah Abu Samah, 1984). This policy also resulted in a common content syllabus for English for the primary and secondary schools in the country (Ali Ab. Ghani et al., 2007). This was facilitated by a common examination paper for the country.

1.2 Pedagogical Approach to Teaching the English Language

The Malaysian English Language Syllabus has changed over the years to meet “the trends, visions, needs of the nation and the theory of language explicitly underlying the language teaching method” (Ali Abd Ghani, et. al, 2007). The Malaysian English Language Syllabus began with the grammar-based syllabus prior to 1975. It has then moved from the structural syllabus to a communicational syllabus to a skill-based syllabus and now the language based syllabus.

The Structural Syllabus was basically rule-governed and it emphasized on accuracy. Thus, it focused on grammatical structures as the underlying units of the language system. The aim of the structural syllabus was for students to “understand how sentences were used to create meaning, to master the underlying rules forming sentences from lower-level grammatical units as phrases and clauses, and to practice using them as basis for written and spoken communication” (Teacher’s Handbook KPM, 1973).

In 1976, the government introduced the Third Malaysian Plan (1976-1980). The focus was on trade and commerce. The government realized the importance of English in international trade and commerce as well as the language used in science and technology (Foo and Richards, 2004). This led to the implementation of the Communicational Syllabus.

Unlike the Structural Syllabus that focused on accuracy, the Communicational Syllabus focused on fluency. This was to prepare the students to participate in international trade and commerce as well as to keep abreast with science and technology. In this syllabus, the starting point was communication. Forms were then selected for carrying out the particular act of communication, which was realized in terms of function (Ali Ab. Ghani, et al., 2007). This syllabus was keen on exploring real life communication in the classroom by exposing students with the tools for generating unrehearsed language performance.

In the 1980’s, the government’s policy shifted to developing holistic students. The National Educational Policy focused on the spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual development of the students (MOE, 1983). Thus, the New Integrated Primary School Syllabus (Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah) and the New Integrated Secondary School Syllabus (Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah) were implemented in 1983 and 1987 respectively.

This thematic syllabus saw the shift from communication to the teaching of oracy skills (listening and speaking) as well as literacy skills (reading and writing). The aim was to prepare students for life and living (MOE, 1983). These syllabi had three main aims. The first was to reflect on authentic language use, where more than one skill was employed. Secondly, they were meant to lead to more effective learning because it was conducive to the inclusion of variety in language teaching. Thirdly,

they facilitated the reinforcement of learning since a particular sub-skill could be taught by using more than one mode (MOE, 1983). Another interesting aspect of this syllabus was the inclusion of the Class Reader Project (Subramaniam, 2007). The aims of this programme were to: (1) expose learners to materials written in English, (2) motivate learners to read and inculcate in them the reading habit, (3) help learners increase their language proficiency through teaching materials that can enrich and consolidate learning, and (4) generate interest in and prepare students for the study of literature (MOE, 1993)

In the late 1990's, Malaysia embarked on a transformation in its classrooms and school practices in the form of the Smart School. This meant that the school system was to undergo a fundamental shift towards a more technologically literate workforce in line with the demands of the global work environment (Siti Suria Salim & Sharifah Md Nor, 2001). Therefore, the shift was necessary to meet the changes and challenges occurring in areas of communication technology, higher education, commerce and industry (Mahathir, 1999). Hence, the school culture needed to be transformed "from one that is memory-based to that is informed, thinking, creative and caring" (Smart School, Conceptual Blueprint, May, 1997: 12).

In addition, the Ministry of Education had reviewed the role of English as a second language in Malaysia. The following were the areas where English language was deemed necessary for students when they leave school: (1) in higher education, they needed to be able to read academic materials in order to broaden their knowledge, (2) the majority of information was gathered through ICT and they were in English. So, they needed a certain competency of English to gather the information, (3) in international relations, the language of communication was always in English, (4) English was an asset to any individual's growth and development in term of recreation and knowledge, and (5) in the workplace, professional materials tend to be in English and were very specific to the job description (Ali Abd. Ghani, 2007:19).

Hence, there was a need for a change of syllabus to meet the changes and needs. The skills based syllabus was replaced by the language use syllabus in the year 2003. It has three domains of using language. They are interpersonal, informational and aesthetic. This will require the students to interact with others, understand them and interpret their behavior in particular changes in modes, motivation and intentions. The informational domain requires the students to gather information from a variety of sources, process the information and present the information to a variety of audiences (MOE, 2003). The aesthetic domain requires learners to appreciate and respond to literary texts and express their ideas, thoughts, beliefs and feelings creatively and imaginatively (MOE, 2003). In addition, the literature in English Component was incorporated into the English language subject and it is tested in the English language paper (Subramaniam, 2003).

This syllabus emphasizes the importance of learner centeredness. The learners are the centre of the learning process. Teaching approaches, lessons and curriculum materials for learning must be adjusted to suit the differing needs and abilities of

students” (MOE, 2003). The teachers are also urged to emphasize thinking skills and apply the principles of the Multiple Intelligences theory.

To prepare students for the real world, this syllabus has outlined seven educational emphases. They are (1) thinking skills, (2) learning how to learn skills, (3) information and communications technology (ICT) skills, (4) values and citizenship, (5) multiple intelligences, (6) values and citizenship, and (6) preparations for the real world (MOE, 2003).

This syllabus marked the emphasis of the Multiple Intelligences theory in the Malaysian Education system. The Revised Curriculum for Secondary Schools (2000) introduced Multiple Intelligences as one of its Educational Emphasis. It stated that:

The learning outcomes also reflect the incorporation of the theory of Multiple Intelligences. This is illustrated, for example, in the interpersonal use of the language among people in social interaction, kinesthetic intelligence in the dramatization of texts, and spatial intelligence in the interpretation of maps and other such activities (Ministry of Education, 2003).

The MOE (2003) realized the benefits of incorporating the Multiple Intelligences theory in the classroom. Teachers are urged to incorporate the Multiple Intelligences theory in their lessons by using interpersonal skills in social interaction, the application of kinesthetic intelligence in the dramatization of texts, and spatial intelligences in the interpretation of maps (MOE, 2003: 4)

1.3 Multiple Intelligences in Malaysia

The Multiple Intelligences theory was founded by Howard Gardner in 1983. This is a psychological and educational theory of intelligence that expanded the concept of intelligence to also include such areas as music, spatial relations and interpersonal knowledge in addition to mathematical and linguistic ability (Gardner, 1983). Gardner defined intelligence as the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural settings (Gardner & Hatch, 1989). Thus, Gardner saw intelligence as a human competence that must entail a set of skills of problem solving which enables a person to resolve genuine problems or difficulties that he or she encounters and, when appropriate, to create an effective product. It must also entail the potential for finding or creating problems and thereby lay the groundwork for the acquisition of knowledge (Armstrong, 1994). This is a paradigm shift from the traditional view that recognizes only two intelligences, linguistic intelligences as well as logical-mathematical intelligences (Armstrong, 1994).

Gardner (1983) posits that each individual has varying levels of intelligences and each individual has a unique cognitive profile. He stated that there are eight intelligences that are quite independent of each other. These intelligences are verbal-linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, visual-spatial intelligence,

musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and naturalist intelligence.

The Multiple Intelligences theory is not widely practiced in Malaysia. According to the CDC (2000), this theory was first introduced into the country by the Art and Health Department, Curriculum Development Centre in the 1990s through its Integrative Learning Workshop System. This was followed by some lecturers from Institut Aminuddin Baki who introduced this theory during a course on school administration. This influenced the Kedah State Education Department personnel who introduced the Multiple Intelligences theory in the teaching and learning of the Year Four English language and came up with a handbook for teachers in 1998. The Bureau of Learning Disabilities (BOLD) used this theory to facilitate learning for children who have learning disabilities. They also organized awareness courses to interested parents and school authorities.

The success of these institutions inspired the Pusat Perkembangan Kurikulum or the Curriculum Development Centre (2002) to carry out a project on the 'Application of Multiple Intelligences' or 'Projek Aplikasi Teori Multiple Intelligences' (PATMI). The general purpose of this project was to help improve the standard of English. There were two goals of this project. They were (1) to develop the individual's understanding and usage of the language in general; and (2) to upgrade the results of the English language. The objectives of this project were: (1) to help improve the standard of English among students; (2) to instill an interest in the language; and (3) to create situations where the English language must be used (PPK, 2000). The teachers were then exposed to the Multiple Intelligences theory and demonstration of lessons using this theory by local and foreign experts. With this knowledge, the teachers integrated the Multiple Intelligences theory in their English lessons in the English as Second language (ESL) classrooms in Malaysia. The findings of the project revealed that: (1) the teachers were comfortable and confident in inculcating the Multiple Intelligences theory in the teaching and learning process despite the fact that preparing the lessons were time consuming, (2) the lessons were student-centred and the teachers played the role of facilitators; (3) students participated actively in the activities and enjoyed the lessons; and (4) continuous assessment was conducted throughout the lesson (PPK, 2000, 2001, and 2002). These findings suggested that the Multiple Intelligences theory is a feasible pedagogical approach to teaching ESL in the classrooms in Malaysia.

To further accentuate the benefits of the Multiple Intelligences theory, C. Parameswary (2005) examined the process of implementing the Multiple Intelligences theory into classroom practice by the teachers who were involved in the PATMI project. She observed seven teachers from three elementary schools in Batang Berjuntai, Selangor. The teachers confided that before the PATMI project they were basically using the chalk and talk method in their English lessons. However, after the exposure to the Multiple Intelligences theory, the teachers often implemented Multiple Intelligences instruction that included verbal linguistics, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic and interpersonal strategies. The teachers were also able to recognize the strengths of the students in the class.

They believed the students were all smart in their own ways. The findings showed that the Multiple Intelligences strategies enhanced the students' engagement in the classroom. The teachers were effective in engaging the students as the students found meaning and purpose in their work. Also, the students were actively involved as the teachers prepared interesting activities for the students to participate in. The teachers also encouraged individual and group activities in the class that encouraged active participation. This emphasized that the Multiple Intelligences theory is a feasible pedagogical approach to teach ESL.

1.4 Statement of Problem

One of the most significant current discussions in the 21st century is that:

Education plays a central role in any country's pursuit of economic growth and national development. There is no better predictor of a nation's future than what is currently happening in classrooms. In today's global economy, a nation's success depends fundamentally on the knowledge, skills and competencies of its people. It is no surprise that nations with higher education levels tend to enjoy greater economic prosperity. (MOE, 2013, p.E-1.)

The quote above is a stark reminder of the importance of teaching and learning in an effort to establish the country's economic development in this 21st century. How has Malaysia progressed in terms of an education that provides its students with the knowledge and skills required for success in life? According to the MOE (2013, p. E-4), the Malaysian education system is at risk as the students were not performing well at international assessments, namely, Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). In the PISA 2012, Malaysia was ranked 52nd out of 65 countries with a reading score of 398 while the average point was 396. This score showed a drop from the previous PISA 2009 report where the reading score was 414. Although the Mathematics score did improve from 404 (2009) to 412 (2012), it was still below the average score of 421 points. Scientific literacy also showed a decline from the previous score of 422 (2009) to 420 (2012). This was also below the average score of 501 points. On the international scale, Malaysian students' performance in these international assessments was described as poor. This is indeed a source of concern for Malaysian educators.

Gardner (1998, p.28) had already drawn attention to the challenges educators would face in the 21st century. He said:

Today's education is challenging and demanding. To have successful education, educators need to rethink and re-conceptualize students' abilities and talents because the students are important for the creation of the future of our country. We must provide the students the best education possible in order to prepare them for the 21st century. The future work force will require students of tomorrow to do more than read, write, speak, listen and perform Mathematical computations.

This concern was also raised by the MOE (2013, p: E-4) as it was clearly stated that “There is, however, increasing global recognition that it is no longer enough for a student to leave school with the three Rs (Reading, wRiting & aRithmetic).”

Gardner (1995) stated that in order to prepare students to survive in the changing world of tomorrow, teachers have to develop a wide range of capacities in each person. This will enable them to reach their potential and to utilize as well as exploit their potentials to achieve success. Gardner (1993: 9) stated that “In my view, the purpose of school should be to develop intelligences and to help people reach vocational and avocational goals that are appropriate to their particular spectrum of intelligences.” Gardner (1993) describes a vision of schooling far removed from the current system of curriculum overload, standardization and national testing. He proposes an individual-centred system in which different types of specialists assessed the learning needs of individual pupils, identify appropriate curriculum experiences and draw on the range of learning opportunities available within the wider community. The MOE shared the same vision and ultimately brought about an overhaul in the education system via the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2015 which aimed at (1) understanding the performance and challenges of the Malaysian education system, with a focus on improving access to education, raising standards (quality), closing achievement gaps (equity), fostering unity amongst students, and maximizing system efficiency; (2) establishing a clear vision and aspirations for individual students and the education system as a whole over the next 13 years; and (3) outlining a comprehensive transformation programme for the system, including key changes to the Ministry which will allow it to meet new demands and rising expectations, and to ignite and support overall civil service transformation (MOE, 2013, p: E-2).

With reference to the first objective with the focus on raising standards, one of the initiatives stressed by the MOE is to tailor support to the needs of students’ of varying abilities (MOE, 2013). The Ministry has always emphasized on tailoring the lessons to meet the students’ varying abilities. The revised curriculum for secondary school in Malaysia (KBSM) recognizes that learners differ from each other in the way they learn as each learner has his or her own strength and unique intelligence, and where possible, individual needs should be taken into account in the teaching process (Sukatan Pelajaran KBSM, 2001). The Ministry of Education in its ongoing efforts towards the quality of education, has introduced the Multiple Intelligences Theory as one of the seven educational emphases in the revised curriculum. The seven emphases are (1) thinking skills, (2) learning how to learn skills, (3) information and communications technology skills, (4) values and citizenship, (5) multiple intelligences, (6) knowledge acquisition and (7) preparation for the real world (HSP, 2003). The HSP (2003, p:4) stated that:

The learning outcomes also reflect the incorporation of the theory of Multiple Intelligences. This is illustrated for example, the use of interpersonal skills in social interaction, the application of kinesthetic intelligence in the dramatization of texts and spatial intelligence in the interpretation of maps.

The importance of planning lessons to tailor to students needs is again emphasized in 'The Pedagogy Standards for the English Language Teaching in Malaysia' (2011, p.37):

The standard covers the requirements for planning and adapting lessons to meet the varied needs of different learners taking into account their learning styles, language abilities and background, and for providing flexible and innovative learning experience for the learners.

It can then be concluded that a successful lesson is a lesson that is tailored to meet the students' needs. This is stressed in the HSP (2003, p: 5) which stated:

In order to bring about effective learning, learners must be given every opportunity to engage in real or simulated activities that require them to use the language i.e. lessons should be activity-based and learner-centred and revolve around real-life tasks...

The Malaysian curriculum thus stresses on the importance of the learner as central in the learning process. However, students are uniquely different from each other due to biological proclivity and cultural nurturance (Gardner, 1993). Gardner, (1993: 15) stated that:

It is of the utmost importance that we recognize and nurture all of the varied human intelligences, and all of the combinations of intelligences. We are all so different largely because we have different combinations of intelligences. If we recognize this, I think we will have at least a better chance of dealing appropriately with the many problems that we face in the world.

Therefore, a standardized lesson plan used in a classroom is not learner-centred as the students have different intelligences. White, Blithe and Gardner (1992) noted that a standardized approach to education faces the serious problems of inevitably neglecting many students.

Gardner (1997:2) stated that the Multiple Intelligences theory is most useful for two educational ends: (1) it allows us to plan educational programs that will enable children to realize desired end states (for example, the musician, the scientist, the civic-minded person); (2) it helps us to reach more children who are trying to understand important theories and concepts in the disciplines. Gardner's theory offered a wide variety of practical applications to teachers and educators in order to improve language classroom practices and match intellectual profiles with educational opportunities (Saphier & Gower, 1987; Chapman, 1993, Armstrong, 1994/1995; Campbell, Christison, 1996/1998; Campbell and Dickinson 1996/1999; Kohn, 1996; Brougher, 1997; Checkley, 1997; Emig, 1997; Berman, 1998; Gibson and Govendo, 1999; Altan, 2001)

Are Malaysian classrooms addressing different intelligences in language classrooms to enhance effective language teaching and learning? One indicator of the effectiveness of language teaching and learning is PISA. If the language teaching and learning is effective, our students would be performing well in this international assessment. However, students' performance in the reading component of PISA has dropped from a score of 414 in 2009 to 398 in 2012. This indicates that the language teaching and learning needs more emphasis. Also, some researchers have revealed that rote learning still reign in classrooms and teachers use the same materials and teaching strategies in classrooms despite differences in students' abilities (Sadaseevan, 1995, Norazlina, 2000; Shantini, 2000; Krishnasamy & Abdullah, 2001; Seliman, 2001). This would inevitably make the lessons boring (Mohd Nazri Latif Azmi, 2003; C. Parameswary, 2005; K. Kemalatha et al., 2006; K. Kemalatha et al., 2007; Mangalam & Thurairaj, 2009; Lee Ming Foong, et.al, 2012; Siti Nurul Mahfuzah Mohd et al., 2014).

Mahathir Mohammad, the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia cried foul over the seeming decline in the English language (in Asiah Abu Samah, 2001) especially in connection with Science and Technology. As the country faces changes and challenges in areas of communication, higher education, commerce and industry, there is a need for "Malaysian students to improve their English language proficiency and also to help them use English for future needs in the workplace" (Vethamani, 2007:5).

Asiah Abu Samah (2001: 236) also showed great concern when she stated that:

The first thing worth noting is the fact that English is taught to all children in all types of schools, whether national-type or private. If one takes into account that Malaysian children do 300 minutes of English per week in Tahap/Phase 1, 270 minutes in Tahap/Phase II in primary schools, and 175 minutes per week in secondary schools – meaning that all Malaysian children in national schools would have at least done some 100,000 minutes of English by the time they leave school – one cannot help but wonder why in the world some of them cannot even utter a coherent sentence at SPM oral English!

Although English is a compulsory subject in the Malaysian curriculum, it is however, not compulsory to pass it. Therefore, students are not taking the learning of English seriously (Awang, 1994). Hence, university students lack the linguistic competence to facilitate the reading of English reference materials despite being exposed to the language for more than ten years (Arnie, 1982; Asmah, 1987; Awang, 1994).

It is obvious then that the Malaysian learners are not progressing well in the English language. Pandian (2000) had outlined six issues raised for the decline in the standard of the English language. They were (1) teacher and methodology, (2) authority and policy making, (3) parents' attitude, (4) society's actual needs for certain language skills, (5) curriculum materials, and (6) patterns of social relations

that prevail in the educational process itself. Pandian's study (2001) on major problems faced by English language teachers revealed that 35% stated insufficient resources, 67% stated students are not motivated while 46% stated the inability to implement ideas.

The Malaysian Education Blueprint is earnest in its effort to raise the education standard of the country. Tan Sri Abd Ghafar B Mahmud, Director-General of Education Malaysia stressed that schools must be able to provide quality teaching, guidance and support for students so that Malaysia will rise from the bottom-third to the top-third of countries in international assessments like PISA and TIMSS in 15 years (MOE, 2013).

It is apparent then that teaching methodology and students' interest are two factors that would help improve the English language proficiency in the Malaysian ESL classroom. However, most of the Malaysian ESL lessons use the same materials and teaching strategies in all classrooms despite differences in students' abilities (Sadaseevan, 1995). Hence, it is necessary for the teachers to identify students' abilities and this is in line with the Multiple Intelligences theory as it recommended educationists to detect human strengths and use them as a basis for engagement and learning (White, Blithe and Gardner, 1992).

It is possible then that the Multiple Intelligence theory may be the feasible pedagogical approach to raise the standard of proficiency in the English language among Malaysian students as it advocates an individualized learning process. Therefore, it is the aim of this study to explore and describe the integration of Multiple Intelligences theory in the Malaysian ESL classroom.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Educators deemed the Multiple Intelligences theory as the ideal approach to individualize the learning process to ensure educational excellence for every student (Blythe and Gardner, 1992, Armstrong, 1994, Jones, 1996, Campbell, 1997; Kagan & Kagan, 1998, Sweet, 1998; Kezar, 2001). Local researchers have also established the significance of integrating the Multiple Intelligences theory to enhance educational excellence (Mohd Nazri Latif Azmi, 2003; C. Parameswary, 2005; K. Kemalatha et al., 2006; K. Kemalatha et al., 2007; Mangalam & Thurairaj, 2009; Lee Ming Foong, et.al, 2012; Siti Nurul Mahfuzah Mohd et al., 2014).

With this perception in mind, the purpose of this study was to examine and explore the manner by which the Multiple Intelligences theory was integrated in selected Malaysian ESL classrooms. The research focused on teachers' practices which entailed pedagogical instructions, teaching approaches and planning of the lessons. To this aim, firstly, the teachers were interviewed to find out their perceptions of the Multiple Intelligences theory. Secondly, the teachers' and students' intelligences profiles were identified using Armstrong's (2000) Checklist for Assessing Students'

Multiple Intelligences. Thirdly, the study aimed to find out if the teachers' activities corresponded to the students' multiple intelligences. The study also aimed to investigate the intelligence(s) most frequently used by the teachers and what were some of the challenges faced by the teachers with regards to integrating the Multiple Intelligences theory. The findings would allow the researcher to make recommendations and show how to teach the English language to cater to students' needs.

1.6 Research Questions

This research was guided by the following research questions:

1. Is the Multiple Intelligences theory reflected in the teachers' English as a Second language lessons?
2. What are the most frequently used intelligences in the English as a Second language classroom?
3. What are the challenges of integrating the Multiple Intelligences theory in the English as a Second language classroom?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study explored the wealth of experience that would be revealed through practice which entailed pedagogical instruction, teaching approaches and lesson plans involved by the teachers. It was hoped that through this enriching experience would emerge a methodology involving the Multiple Intelligences theory that motivates and appeals to all students.

This exploration would also benefit the Teacher Training Colleges and those involved in other higher education institutions in determining the curricular constructs of teacher-related programmes and training in ESL.

The findings will be a rich source of information for the Curriculum Development Centre on the effectiveness of Multiple Intelligences as an Educational Emphasis in secondary schools. The findings would also guide them in organizing and planning programmes for in-service courses for teachers to help them improve their pedagogical and professional skills.

The benefits of integrating the Multiple Intelligences theory in the ESL classrooms abound as it caters to the students' predominant intelligences and they would attain success as the activities appeal to them. Hence, they would be motivated to learn. Thus, this study would provide opportunities for the researcher to suggest how best to integrate the Multiple Intelligences theory into ESL lessons so that students would be stimulated to learn the language in a pathway that appeals to them and is conducive to their own learning.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study examined English language teachers' teaching approaches in integrating the Multiple Intelligences theory in their ESL classrooms. Thus, the scope of this study lay within the boundaries of English language teachers, their content knowledge, their pedagogical knowledge, experiences and interpretation of the Multiple Intelligences theory. Since this study was explorative in nature, a qualitative research paradigm was most suited to answer the research questions.

This study was carried out in a regular public secondary school or Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK) in the East Coast of the Peninsular Malaysia. The participants of this study were trained English language teachers who had a minimum of three years experience teaching the English language. The teachers had a varied and diversified educational background.

The framework of this study was bound by the Multiple Intelligences theory. This study intended to explore teachers' understanding of the Multiple Intelligences theory and how they interpreted this theory into the teaching and learning of ESL in the classroom. Finally, the researcher would like to investigate the teaching approaches used by the teachers to incorporate the Multiple Intelligences theory in the ESL classroom. Five principles were derived from the literature review. The researcher was keen to investigate which of these five principles were commonly used in the Malaysian ESL classrooms. These five principles were to: (1) recognize the multiple intelligences in teachers and students, (2) integrate multiple intelligences in the lessons, (3) create opportunities for students to use their multiple intelligences to enhance learning, (4) carry out assessments that enable students to use their multiple intelligences to portray their understanding of the lesson instead of the paper-and-pencil test, (5) encourage apprenticeship to enable students to master a valued skill gradually under the tutelage of a professional. A triangulation method would be used to collect the qualitative data. They were interviews, observations and documents (record books and reflection grids). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) wrote about the importance of participant observation, interviewing one person and listening to small groups. Also, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) discussed case study as personal experience, and observational, historical and visual texts.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The present study did not seek generalizability but profundity and depth in its findings and interpretation. Thus, there are delimiting variables that need to be clarified. The research design permitted a small number of teachers as samples. Since the focus was on teachers, the study did not partially look at learners although the researcher did observe learners' responses through their gestures, facial expressions and spoken and written products.

Due to time constraints, the study was conducted in a school over a limited period of time. The researcher could only carry out class observations within a three-month

period. The findings and conclusions were derived through analysis of the data and supported by examples drawn from the data itself.

1.10 Definition of Terms

(a) Multiple Intelligences

Multiple Intelligences is a psychological and educational theory of intelligence developed by Howard Gardner in 1983. According to him, there are eight intelligences which are independent of each other. These intelligences are verbal-linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, visual-spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and naturalist intelligence. Linguistic intelligence is the capacity to use the language, your native language, and perhaps other languages, to express what's on your mind and to understand other people while those with logical-mathematical intelligence understand the underlying principles of some kind of causal system, the way a scientist or logician does; or can manipulate numbers, quantities, and operations the way a mathematician does. (Gardner, 1997). He defines spatial intelligence as the ability to represent the spatial world internally in one's mind-the way a sailor or airplane pilot navigates the large spatial world, or the way a chess player or sculptor represents a more circumscribed spatial world. Gardner (1997) defines bodily-kinesthetic intelligence as the capacity to use your whole body or parts of your body-your hand, your fingers, your arms-to solve a problem, make something, or put on some kind of a production while musical intelligence is defined as the capacity to think in music, be able to hear patterns, recognize them, remember them, and perhaps manipulate them. He states that interpersonal intelligence involves understanding other people while intrapersonal intelligence is defined as having an understanding of yourself, of knowing who you are, what you can do, what you want to do, how you react to things, which things to avoid, and which things to gravitate toward. According to Gardner (1997), naturalist intelligence designates the human ability to discriminate among living things (plants, animals) as well as sensitive to other features of the natural world.

b) ESL classroom

This referred to the teaching of the English Language in countries where the English language is not the official language or the native language. The English language is taught in Malaysian classrooms to teach pupils to use the language for communicational purposes as well as to utilize the language at higher levels of education.

c) Integrating of the Multiple Intelligences theory into the ESL classroom

For the purpose of this study, this term referred to how teachers use this theory to facilitate the teaching and learning process by preparing activities that catered to the eight intelligences and also how these teachers utilized the multiple intelligences beyond the classroom.

1.11 Summary

This chapter put forward the introduction to the framework of the study. It gave a description of the background of the study which entailed a brief overview of learning theories, Multiple Intelligences theory and the teaching of ESL in the Malaysian classrooms. The statement problem was also discussed. The purpose of the study, the objective of the study and the scope of the study were also stated. The next chapter will discuss the literature review which would substantiate the theoretical foundation of the study. It would discuss the development of intelligence research from the different perspectives including the development of the Multiple Intelligences theory. It would discuss the five principles to integrate the Multiple Intelligences theory into ESL lessons and discuss previous researches followed by the discussion on the theoretical framework of the study.



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