

## **Multiple ways to be smart: Gardener's Theory of Multiple Intelligences and its educational implications in English teaching and oral communication**

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### **Abstract:**

This article describes Gardener's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI Theory) that was originated in 1983 in his most celebrated book, *Frames of Mind*. This theory has revolutionised the idea of intelligence providing evidence on the existence of more than one intelligence (i.e. at least seven). The article sheds some light on the history of MI Theory and the traditional IQ tests to clarify the rationale underlying this new theory. Then, it illustrates the initial seven intelligences that Gardener suggested (i.e. Verbal-linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, spatial intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal-reflective intelligence and musical intelligence). It goes on to highlight the educational applications and implications of MI Theory in English Language Teaching, with special focus on what has come to be called *MI-Based Instruction*. After that, it tackles communications skills in English and the importance of the communication process, with special focus on speaking. Learning styles and strategies as a learner-centred approach which is closely related with MI Theory is also tackled.

## **Introduction:**

There has been a significant shift in the history of education: a shift from the traditional teacher-centered approaches to learner-centered ones. For so long time, educators and principals had been so much concerned with implanting knowledge in a uniform way and giving students some previously-prepared courses. This led to creating stereotypes of students. Those students have been the victims of a traditional way of instruction that addressed all the students in the same way.

With the appearance of ‘humanism’ in the sixties, new ideas in teaching came to the scene. These ideas were the direct result of the new outlook of the student. “ *The conventional, authoritative teacher-centered instruction has given way to the learner-centered mode of instruction. Educators started paying attention to the impact that learners’ affective factors may bring in the process of learning*” ( Lin, 2000 ).

Educators and psychologists began to view education according to another perspective; they highlighted the necessity for caring for the learners’ individual differences and learning styles because they represent the foundation upon which instructors should build their instructional methods. Gardner suggests that the challenge of this millennium is whether we can make these differences central to teaching and learning or whether we will instead continue to treat everyone in a uniform way. Gardner proposes ‘individually configured education’-an education that takes individual differences seriously and craft practices that serve different kinds of minds equally well (Berman, 2001:5).

To teach effectively does not mean just to present the content in a skilful way. There are many other factors involved in the teaching-learning process. Teaching is not something that is completely performed by the teacher, who is supposed to be the active side all the time, and directed to the students, who are considered the passive side. The students are never passive , anyway, because they handle the information they receive:

“Effective teaching requires a thorough understanding of the learning process, characteristics of students at different stages of development, individual differences, factors that influence motivation, and procedures for maintaining orderly classrooms. Teachers rely on this background when they make decisions about what they will teach, which points they will emphasize, and how they will present content to their students” (Eggen & Kauchak, 1994:545 ).

## **Multiple Intelligences Theory:**

Since Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory is a relatively new term for many people, the researcher devotes this section to shed some light on the theory. The theory will be tackled according to these angles: The new concept of intellect; history of MI Theory; main principles of MI Theory; the multiple intelligences. Multiple Intelligences Theory has come as a reaction to the classical outlook upon the human intelligence; it is a revolutionary theory which came at the same time when many theories appeared so as to explain the human intellectual abilities. *“Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory offers a revolutionary, multi-faceted model of human intelligence. Gardner (1983) claimed that intelligence cannot be characterized by a single quantifiable test score and consists of several discrete abilities”* (Campbell, 2000).

There have been two main theories which appeared in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and which were an attempt to interpret human differences and to design educational models around these differences: Learning Styles Theory which has its roots in the psychoanalytical community and Multiple Intelligences Theory which is the fruit of cognitive science (Silver, et al., 1997:22).

Multiple Intelligences Theory was first proposed by Howard Gardner, a professor of cognition and education at Harvard University, in his most celebrated book, *Frames of Mind*, in 1983. He regarded it “as a pluralistic view of mind which recognizes many different and discrete facets of cognition and acknowledges that people have different cognitive strengths and contrasting cognitive styles (Cahill, 1999:2). Since then, educators have become so interested to apply this theory as a means through which they can improve teaching and learning in a multiplicity of ways. The theory represents a new orientation towards the nature of intelligences (Goodnough, 2000).

In designing his theory, Gardner opposes the traditional view of the intellect stating that his theory is a new outlook of the human intelligence. He considers the intelligences as a new definition of the human nature. Throughout the history of humanity, many philosophers and scientists have defined the human nature in many different ways. Their definitions have relied on their own perspectives or points of view. Gardner (1999:44) states that Socrates looked upon man as a rational and sophisticated animal, while Freud saw him as an irrational being. Gardner describes man as an organism who possesses a basic set of intelligences.

Thus he looks upon human beings in the light of a group of intelligences that they are supposed to have

***1-A New Concept of Intelligence:***

Traditionally, psychologists have looked upon intelligence as a linear concept that can be simply measured by IQ tests. They found that intelligence is the most difficult term to define. The first generation of psychologists of intelligence, such as Spearman (1927) and Terman (1975), cited by Gardner (1993:xii), tended to believe that intelligence was best conceptualized as a single, general capacity for conceptualization and problem solving. They sought to demonstrate that a group of scores on tests reflected a single underlying factor of general intelligence.

Gardner (1993:3-11) presented a new concept of the human intelligence. This new concept contrasts completely with the traditionally accepted concept which states that the human intelligence is a linear concept which is measured by IQ tests.

Further, MI Theory suggests that every one is capable of learning and knowing about the world around him. Thus the theory suggests a new definition of intelligence. For most of the history of human beings, there was no scientific definition of intelligence. People spoke about the concept of intelligence so often and classified people as either ‘dull’ or ‘bright’ with varying degrees (Gardner, 1993:xii). Gardner defines intelligence as *“the ability to solve problems, or to fashion products, that are valued in one or more cultural or community settings”* (Cahill, 1999:1).

Gardner (1999:34) refined his definition, giving a more comprehensive and accurate one which highlights the great effect that society or culture has on intelligence. He defines intelligence as *“a bio-psychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture.”*

Again Gardner (1999:1) emphasizes the impact which the cultural forces have on the human intellect. That is why some intelligences are developed in some person, while others are not developed in the same person. The environment in which the individual lives, and the culture which he acquires, and the surrounding people with whom he interacts, play a great role in shaping his intelligences:

“Every society features the ideal human being. The ancient Greeks valued the person who displayed physical agility, rational judgement, and virtuous behaviour. The Romans highlighted manly courage” (Gardner, 1999:1).

It is better to refer to the human intellectual power as it is composed of many talents which are referred to as intelligences. In this way, man is looked upon in a fair way:

“Human cognitive competence is better described in terms of a set of abilities, talents or mental skills, which we call ‘intelligences’. All normal individuals possess each of these skills to some extent; individuals differ in the degree of skill and in the nature of their combination” (Walters & Gardner, 1995:53).

It is evident that all human beings, provided that they are normal, possess all these intelligences, but with varying degrees. No two individuals are the same; they may deal with same subject matter, or with the same topic in a different way.

Gardner (1999:34) considers his new concept of intelligence as an expansion of the term ‘intelligence’. This new concept includes areas that had not been considered of any relation to intelligence at all. There are many human capacities, talents or skills which are not considered intelligences at all, such as the musical talent, social skills, and bodily skills. People who are sociable, for example, are regarded as socially skilled, but are not regarded as having an interpersonal intelligence. Similarly, people, who are able to perform beautiful dances or difficult movements with amazing coordination of their body muscles, are considered skillful at using their body, but are not regarded as having a bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. In this respect, the human intelligence will encompass many capacities which are relatively independent of one another.

Moreover, we should admit that our minds are so different and distinct from one another; no two persons have the same kinds of minds. Consequently, our mental abilities or capacities are not the same. That is to say we do not process the information we receive identically in the same way:

“We do not have the same strength in each intelligence area, and we do not have the same combination of intelligences. The idea is that our minds are just as distinct as our personalities” (Sakamoto & Tsai, 2000).

## ***2-History of MI Theory and IQ Tests:***

### ***a) History of MI Theory:***

Tracing back Multiple Intelligences Theory in the history of education and instruction, one can find that it is not totally a new concept. It appeared in many forms a very long time ago when philosophers and educators began to call for modifying instruction in the light of the learners' personalities. They realized the importance of caring for the learners as individuals who should learn in a peaceful, and non-threatening way. A long time ago-in the early history of education-philosophers called for making things easy for the students to learn. As philosophy guiding instruction, the theory is not a new concept (Dorathy, 1999). For example, Plato, cited in Campbell (1997), states his advice to educators saying:

“Don't then train youths to learn by force and harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their minds so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of genius of each.”

This ancient call that was made by this great philosopher is considered the origin of the idea of the multiple intelligences; Plato, cited in Campbell (1997), admitted that each student is smart and has a kind of genius that should be discovered. In order to discover it, teachers should teach their students in an amusing way that appeals to them. This is the core of the educational implications of MI Theory.

More recently, the pioneers of modern education called for basing education on more than verbal teaching. They wanted to develop new systems of education in which the student was to be in focus. The famous philosopher, Jean Jacque Rousseau, of the 18th century declared that “*the child must learn not through words, but through experience; not through books, but through the book of life*” ( Armstrong, 1994:49 ).

“The Swiss reformer Johanna Heinrich Pestalozzi emphasized an integrated curriculum that regarded physical, moral, and intellectual training based solidly on concrete experiences. The founder of modern day kindergarten, Friedrich Froebel, developed a curriculum consisting of hands-on experiences with manipulatives, playing games, singing songs, gardening and caring for animals. Froebel created a respect for

children including their individuality, dynamic, and creative abilities” (Dorathy, 1999).

In the 20th century, innovators like Maria Montessori and John Dewey evolved systems of instruction based upon multiple-intelligences-like techniques, including Montessori’s tactile letters and other self-paced materials, and Dewey’s vision of the classroom as a microcosm of society.

The traditional concept of intelligence limits the human capacities in a very narrow scale. Intelligence is not a linear concept that is always measured by IQ tests. Intelligence is so wide that it cannot be measured in this way (Gardner, 1999:1-14).

Therefore, there were alternative theories of intelligence which appeared to change this traditional concept of intelligence. These theories were espoused by Sternberg (1985), Ceci (1990), Feldman (1986), and others, cited in White et al. (1995:180). They have been popular in the educational circles. These theories share something in common; they assert that human beings “*exhibit intelligent behaviour in a wide variety of ways. People are not simply ‘smart’ or ‘dumb’. They vary in their intellectual strength depending on the context in which they are working*” (White, et al., 1995:180).

### ***b) IQ tests and Identifying or Classifying Students:***

IQ tests were developed by Binet and were used to assess the children’s potential in school (Berman, 2001:4). The main problem with these standardized tests is that they focus on two intelligences only: linguistic intelligence and logical-mathematical intelligence, which have been always regarded as ‘scholastic’ intelligences (Gardner, 1999:1-10; Hoerr, 2000:1-15)

Another problem is that IQ tests are not predictive of the total performance of the individual. There are so many aspects of the human performance that are not predicted by IQ tests:

“Hurnstein and Murray (1994)”, cited in Sternberg (1996:18), “ in The Bell Curve argue that IQ is predictive of almost any kind of success that is imaginable in our society...What they fail to highlight, though IQ is predictive, is that the prediction is quite weak...Conventional academic intelligence tests account for less than 10 percent of the individual variation differences in actual performance...More than 90 percent of the

variation we see in performance is not accounted for by conventional ability tests.”

The marks which the student gets cannot represent a final judgement on his performance in a particular field. The student’s level can be higher than the marks indicate. A final conclusion cannot be drawn just from these marks: “*A teacher who has to give a failing mark often does so with the nagging sense that the student is smarter than the grade indicates*” (White, et al., 1995:174). In addition to that, performance in the classroom is not indicative of the person’s mastery of every thing; a lot of people excel in many fields after they are graduated. “*Very few people who make it to the top of their fields are the same ones who were the top performers in school*” (Sternberg, 1996:18).

### **3-The Multiple Intelligences:**

Gardner states that there are at least seven intelligences, and that there is a possibility of the existence of more intelligences. Here is a demonstration of the seven intelligences according to three main dimensions: The meaning of each intelligence; the characteristics of the persons who exhibit each intelligence; examples of the jobs or life fields in which each intelligence appears:

#### **1) Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence:**

*Meaning:*

Verbal/linguistic intelligence involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals (Gardner, 1999:37).

*Characteristics:*

A person with well-developed verbal/linguistic intelligence usually (1) listens and responds to the sound, rhythm, color, and variety of the spoken word; (2) learns through listening, reading, writing, and discussing; (3) listens effectively, comprehends, paraphrases, interprets, and remembers what has been said; (4) reads and speaks effectively, comprehends, summarizes, interprets or explains, and remembers what has been read; (5) exhibits ability to learn other languages and uses listening, speaking, writing, and reading to communicate, discuss, explain and persuade (Laughlin, 1999).

*Examples:*

There are many people who demonstrate a high degree of this intelligence such as Poets, lawyers, public speakers and writers. Those people are able to use the written and spoken word properly.

### ***2) Logical/mathematical intelligence:***

#### *Meaning:*

It entails the ability to reason either deductively or inductively, recognize and manipulate abstract patterns and relationships (White et al., 1995:181). It is applied to those who investigate issues scientifically (Gardner, 1999:42).

#### *Characteristics:*

A person with well-developed logical/mathematical intelligence usually (1) demonstrates skill at logical problem-solving; (2) enjoys complex operations such as computer programming, or research methods; (3) thinks mathematically; (4) expresses interest in careers such as accounting, computer technology, law, engineering, and chemistry (Laughlin, 1999).

#### *Examples:*

There are many kinds of people who exhibit a high degree of this intelligence such as scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, logicians, computer programmers and accountants. Besides, there are many people throughout history who demonstrated a well-developed logical/mathematical intelligence such as the famous philosophers, *Plato* and *Aristotle*, and the great scientist, *Archimedes*.

### ***3) Intrapersonal/introspective intelligence:***

#### *Meaning:*

It involves the capacity to understand oneself: (i.e. one's own desires, fears, and capacities). It also involves using such information effectively in regulating one's own life (Gardner, 1999:43).

#### *Characteristics:*

A person with well-developed intrapersonal intelligence usually (1) is aware of his range of emotions; (2) finds approaches and outlets to express his feelings and thoughts; (3) works independently and is curious about the "big questions" in life: meaning, relevance, and purpose; (4) attempts to seek out and understand inner experiences; (5) gains insights into the complexities of self and the human condition; (6) strives for self-actualization (Laughlin, 1999).

#### *Examples:*

There are many kinds of people who exhibit a high degree of this intelligence such as independent learners, self-paced learners, and great thinkers and decision-makers.

#### **4) *Interpersonal intelligence:***

##### *Meaning:*

It denotes a person's capacity to understand other people (i.e. their intentions, motivations, desires, hidden goals, etc.) and consequently to work effectively with others (Gardner, 1999:43).

##### *Characteristics:*

A person with well-developed interpersonal intelligence usually (1) forms and maintains social relationships and recognizes and uses a variety of ways to relate to others; (2) perceives the feelings, thoughts, motivations, behaviors, and lifestyles of others; (3) influences the opinions or actions of others; (4) understands and communicates effectively; (5) adapts behavior to different environments or groups; (6) expresses an interest in interpersonally-oriented careers such as teaching, social work, counseling, management, or politics (Laughlin, 1999).

##### *Examples:*

There are many kinds of people who exhibit a high degree of this intelligence such as religious leaders, political leaders, teachers, and psychologists.

#### **5) *Bodily/kinesthetic intelligence:***

##### *Meaning:*

It entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body (like the hand or the mouth) to solve problems or fashion products (Gardner, 1999:42). In other words, it involves using the body to solve problems, create products, and convey ideas or emotions (White, 1995:181).

##### *Characteristics:*

A person with well-developed bodily/kinesthetic intelligence usually (1) explores the environment and objects through touch and movement; (2) learns best by direct involvement and participation and remembers most clearly what was done, rather than what was said or observed; (3) enjoys concrete learning experiences such as field trips, model building, or participating in role play, games; (4) is sensitive and responsive to physical environments and physical systems; (5) demonstrates skill in acting, athletics, dancing, sewing, etc; (6) may

express interest in careers such as those of an athlete, dancer, surgeon, or builder (Laughlin, 1999).

*Examples:*

There are many kinds of people who exhibit a high degree of this intelligence such as dancers, actors, athletes, and craft-persons.

### **6) Visual/spatial intelligence:**

*Meaning:*

It is the ability to create visual-spatial representations of the world and transfer those representations either mentally, or concretely. It features the potential to recognize and manipulate the patterns of wide space as well as the patterns of more confined areas (Gardner, 1999:43).

*Characteristics:*

A person with well-developed visual/spatial intelligence usually (1) learns by seeing and observing; (2) recognizes faces, objects, shapes, colors, details, and scenes; uses visual images as an aid in recalling information; enjoys drawing, painting, etc; (5) creates concrete or visual representation of information; (6) expresses interest or skill in being an artist, photographer, engineer, architect and designer (Laughlin, 1999).

*Examples:*

There are many kinds of people who exhibit a high degree of this intelligence such as navigators, pilots, sculptures, sailors, engineers, painters and all those people who are concerned with drawing, designing, sailing and recognizing space.

### **7) Musical/rhythmic intelligence:**

*Meaning:*

It entails skill in performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns (Gardner, 1999:42). It includes sensitivity to pitch, timbre, and rhythm of sounds, as well as responsiveness to the emotional implications to these elements.

*Characteristics:*

A person with well-developed musical/rhythmic intelligence usually (1) listens and responds with interest to a variety of sounds (White, 1995:181); (2) enjoys and seeks out opportunities to hear music or

environmental sounds in the learning environment; responds to music kinesthetically by performing and moving; collects music and information about music in various; develops the ability to sing and/or play an instrument alone or with others; (5) enjoys playing with sounds, and when given a phrase of music, can complete a musical statement in a way that makes sense; (6) may offer his or her own interpretation of what a composer is communicating through music; may express interest in careers involving music such as being a singer, instrumentalist and sound engineer (Laughlin, 1999).

*Examples:*

There are many kinds of people who exhibit a high degree of this intelligence such as composers, instrumentalists, vocalists, and birds' singing lovers.

#### **4-Importance of MI Theory in Education:**

Since Gardner proposed his Multiple Intelligences Theory in his book, *Frames of Mind* in 1983, a great majority of educators have been applying it in education. They have considered the idea of multiple intelligences as a ‘powerful medicine’ for the shortcomings that are existent in the educational system. Whether they used it as a teaching approach, method or strategy or as an assessment tool, they agreed on that instruction should be tailored according to the multiple intelligences of the students. They called for considering the strengths of the students that may exist in other areas other than the logical-mathematical and verbal-linguistic areas. Common sense tells us that it is so hard to deny the importance of the ‘non-academic’ intelligence such as musical activities, self-awareness, or visual spatial abilities (Shearer, 1999).

In the following section, there is an illustration of the points that give value and importance to the application of MI Theory in the educational settings. These points show the advantages of MI Theory in the field of education and encourage all the teachers around the world to use it in their teaching in a way that suits the subject matter they teach and the educational conditions they have.

##### ***a) MI Theory as a Tool to Achieve More Success:***

Teachers are strongly motivated to help all students to learn. Therefore, they have explored MI Theory as a tool that makes more kids learn and succeed. The great majority of the classrooms are characterized by the existence of scholastic winners and losers. MI Theory is important here because it teaches us that all the kids are smart, and that they differ only in the way in which they are smart. Thus, all children have potential and using MI increases the opportunities for students to learn and succeed, giving adults more ways to grow professionally and personally (Hoerr, 2000:x).

##### ***b) MI Makes Learning More Enjoyable:***

Students learn better if they like what they are learning and enjoy it. It is hard for students to learn without interest. When students do not like what they learn, they feel bored and tired even if they are able to learn well and succeed in the final exam. Therefore, it is better to create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere in which students like what they learn and enjoy it. Using MI Theory in the classroom can help teachers to create such an encouraging atmosphere:

“Students learn best when they enjoy what they are doing. Giving them the opportunity to display their talents, learn new skills without fear of embarrassment or failure, and laugh in the process makes the learning experience rewarding for both teacher and student” (Bailey, 1999:37).

***c) MI Cares for Individual Differences in Learning:***

All students are different. No two persons are exactly the same even the identical twins. Even the same person is different from one period to another or from one situation to another in many ways. Difference is the rule and stability is the exception. This is applied to students while they are learning in the classroom:

“It is a fact of classroom life that what interests one student leaves another bored, literally, to distraction. It is also a fact that the student who is the most enthusiastic on Tuesday is often the one who is the most bored on Wednesday. This phenomenon can leave students feeling short-changed and teachers feeling frustrated and guilty for failing to reach their students. The theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI)...not only helps explain this phenomenon, but helps teachers find ways around the obstacles to learning” (Bailey, 1999:36).

It is evident that we will never reach all the learners, whatever approach to teaching we adopt, unless we teach multi-modally and cater for all the intelligences in our lessons (Berman, 2001). Therefore, MI Theory is greatly required so as to deal with the different students who have different minds. It will involve all the students with their different personalities to have more chance for learning and achieving success in spite of these differences that cannot be considered.

***5-Multiple Intelligences-Based Instruction:***

Multiple Intelligences Theory and its applications in the educational settings are growing so rapidly. Many educators began to adopt MI-Based Instruction as a way to overcome the difficulties which they encounter with their students as a result of their individual differences and their learning styles. These difficulties may be represented in their inability to reach most of their students. As a result, they become frustrated and their students lose interest in the teaching-learning process as a whole. These difficulties may be caused by the uniform way in which they teach their students : “*There are currently thousands of MI teachers and ten thousands of students undergoing MI-based classroom instruction*” (Campbell, 2000:12).

Once Multiple Intelligences Theory is understood, it can be applied in education in a variety of ways. There is no one definite way through which the theory can be applied in education. The theory is very flexible and it can be adapted to the context in which it is applied. *“The theory can be implemented in a wide range of instructional contexts, from highly traditional settings where teachers spend much of their time directly teaching students to open environments where students regulate most of their own learning”* (Armstrong, 1994:51).

Thus instruction can be modified and organized in the light of MI Theory. The theory in this case acts as a framework for teaching upon which teaching is organized:

“On a deeper level...MI theory suggests a set of parameters within which educators can create new curricula. In fact, the theory provides a context within which educators can address any skill, content, area, theme, or instructional objectives, and develop at least seven ways to teach it. Essentially, MI Theory offers a means of building daily lesson plans, weekly units, or monthly or year-long themes and programs in such a way that all students can have their strongest intelligences addressed at least some of the time” (Armstrong, 1994:57).

Using MI in instruction means that students learn in different ways and express their understanding in many ways. Using paper and pencil measures as traditional measures limits the students’ capacity to the linguistic skills which they use in writing their answers (Hoerr, 2000:12-14).

Under the use of MI-Based instruction, the students are treated as individuals. The students’ talents and interests are not ignored because it is not fair to concentrate on some students and neglect others whose capacities and talents are not well-identified. This idea is emphasized by Hoerr (2000) who gives a definition of MI approach in the light of which instruction is delivered in a way that considers students’ interests and talents:

“An MI approach means developing curriculum and using instruction that taps into students’ interests and talents. Students are given options, different ways to learn, and they share responsibility in their learning” (Hoerr, 2000:12)

Gardner (1999:151) proposed another alternative to the traditional way of learning which is called ‘individually-configured education’. This

way considers individual differences seriously and crafts practices that can be useful to different kinds of minds.

In this type of education, the human individual differences are given primacy to anything else. The students are not obliged to learn in a uniform way in which the student who has a different kind of mind is viewed as a stupid one. This is a very limited view of this student who is not linguistically or mathematically talented. This unfair view does not allow the other talents to come out. Instead, the individual talents and interests are given more focus, and are also allowed to come out.

Consequently, the teacher's role is different from the one he used to perform in the traditional way of instruction:

“In the traditional classroom, the teacher lectures while standing at the front of the classroom, writes on the blackboard, asks students questions about the assigned reading or handouts, and waits while students finish their written work. In the MI classroom, the teacher continually shifts her method of presentation from linguistic to spatial to musical and so on, often combining intelligences in creative ways” (Armstrong, 1994:50).

The teacher's role has to be changed, simply because the philosophy under which the new role is performed is completely different from the old one: In the old philosophy, which is completely teacher-centered, instruction is dominated by the teacher who is considered the source of information and the planter of knowledge.

Using MI theory in education involves using it as a content of instruction and as a means of conveying this content at the same time. This indicates that using MI Theory can take many forms. The ultimate goal of any form in which the theory is used is to facilitate instruction as much as possible, and reaching all the students at the same time:

“Under MI Theory, an intelligence can serve both as the content of instruction and the means or medium for communicating that content. This state of affairs has important ramifications for instruction. For example, suppose that a child is learning some mathematical principle but that this child is not skilled in Logical-Mathematical Intelligence. The child will probably experience some difficulty during the learning process...In the present example, the teacher must attempt to find an alternative route to the mathematical content—a metaphor in another medium. Language is perhaps the most obvious alternative, but spatial modeling and even bodily-kinesthetic metaphor may prove appropriate in some cases” (Walters & Gardner, 1999:74-75).

In teaching English, Multiple Intelligences-Based Instruction can be effective in many ways: first of all, the students are given many options and opportunities to express themselves in the English language. Second, students are not confined to answer their exams using only two types of tests:

“Using MI in curriculum and instruction means that students learn and show their understanding in many different ways. While paper and pencil measures--essays and objective tests--have their role, they invariably limit the students’ responses to a few intelligences...By limiting students to writing their answers, relying on their linguistic skills, the teacher may find out whether a student has a good command of the English language and writes well, but she may shortchange students’ understanding in other ways” (Hoerr, 2000:13-14).

To base the instruction of the English language on MI Theory means that the teacher should use a variety of teaching strategies which should be used in a way that makes this instruction address the intelligences which the students possess. In this way, the English language is taught in a natural atmosphere. This is a model of instruction which applies the MI philosophy:

“On one level, MI Theory applied to the curriculum might be best represented by a loose and diverse collection of teaching strategies. In this sense, MI Theory represents a model of instruction that has no distinct rules other than the demands imposed by the cognitive components of the intelligences themselves. Teachers can pick and choose from (many) activities, implementing the theory in a way suited to their own unique teaching style and congruent with their educational philosophy (as long as that philosophy does not declare that all children learn in the same way)” (Armstrong, 1994:57).

Catering for the various intelligences which the students possess is not an easy task; it needs much effort from both the teacher and the students. The teacher is obliged to achieve a match between the standard curriculum and the student’s proclivities:

“Making the match between the standard curriculum and each student’s proclivities is not easy, but progress can be achieved with the efforts of teachers and students. Teachers can take an active role by shaping their presentations of the curriculum to fit the needs of a wider range of students. . . Experienced and successful teachers often cater to a range of students by teaching each part of the curriculum in many different ways” (White, 1995:186)

This means that those successful and experienced teachers do not deal with some concept or some content area in a uniform way. Rather

they diversify their methods of presentation in such a way that the same concept or content area is dealt with in many different ways. This will result in the involvement of more of the students' multiple intelligences at the same time, and thus, involving more students in the teaching-learning process. Thus they provide the learners with several opportunities to understand and learn the same concept:

“They tend to revisit a key concept or theme often and with variations to provide several opportunities for students to approach a concept from different perspectives. In multiple intelligences terms, this variety provides the multiple paths to understanding necessary to engage the multiple intelligences that students bring to the classroom” (White, 1995:186).

To develop his instruction under the MI philosophy, the teacher has to do his best in order to develop the materials in a way that makes them appropriate to address the students' multiple intelligences. In other words, the teacher has to translate the linguistic materials into activities that cope with MI Theory. The teacher of English, for example, has to consider the linguistic content he is dealing with and try to involve other intelligences and translate this content, not into French for example, but into the languages of these intelligences.

“The best way to approach curriculum development using the theory of multiple intelligences is by thinking about how we can translate the material to be taught from one intelligence to another. In other words, how can we take a linguistic symbol system, such as the English language, and translate it--not into other linguistic languages, such as Spanish or French, but into the languages of other intelligences, namely, pictures, physical or musical expression, logical symbols or concepts, social interactions, and intrapersonal connections” (Armstrong, 1994:57-58).

The following seven-step procedure suggests one way to create lesson plans or curriculum units using MI Theory as an organizing framework: (Armstrong, 1994:58:60)

- One) Focus on specific objectives
- Two) Ask key Multiple Intelligences Questions
- Three) Consider the Possibilities
- Four) Brainstorm
- Five) Select Appropriate Activities
- Six) Set Up to a Sequential Plan
- Seven) Implement the Plan.

However, we should keep in mind that the theory is not a rigid model that must be applied in a certain way. The teacher can adapt the theory in a way that serves his stated objectives and carry out his goals. He should be thoughtful and creative so as to use it effectively inside his classroom. In this way the theory becomes a means to an end not an end in itself:

“Although the multiple intelligences theory provides an effective instructional framework, teachers should avoid using it as a rigid pedagogical formula. One teacher who attempted to teach all content through all eight modes every day admitted that he occasionally had to tuck on activities. Even students complained that some lessons were really stretching it. Instructional methods should be appropriate for the content” (Campbell, 1997).

This means that the theory is very flexible and has many ways of application in the teaching process. Also we should keep in mind that it is not obligatory to use all the intelligences to teach a certain content. This may take so much time. Also, this makes the learning process boring instead of making it interesting to the students. Therefore, we should always ask ourselves about the main idea of this model in the teaching-learning process. The main idea lies in the fact that we can teach anything in a variety of ways. This makes our teaching appeal to many students:

“The master code of this learning style model is simple: for whatever you wish to teach, link your instructional objectives to words, numbers or logic, pictures, music, the body, social interaction, and/or personal experience. If you can create activities that combine these intelligences in unique ways, so much the better” (Armstrong, 1994).

Gardner (1999) indicated three positive ways in which MI can be - and has been –used in schools:

- 1) The cultivation of desired capacities.
- 2) Approaching a concept, subject matter, or discipline in variety of ways.
- 3) The personalization of education.

*“To begin lesson planning, teachers should reflect on a concept that they want to teach and identify the intelligences that seem most appropriate for communicating the content”* (Campbell, 1997). This is the main strategy which the researcher will adopt in order to teach and develop the speaking skills. To teach speaking effectively using MI-Based Instruction, the teacher should determine the intelligences which are the most closely related to the speaking skills. Of course all the

intelligences are related, but there are some intelligences which are more related to the speaking skills than others. Besides, some intelligences might come into play in one situation more effectively than others.

There are many intelligences which are closely related to the speaking skills. These intelligences are interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, verbal-linguistic intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. For example, the interpersonal intelligence is concerned here because it entails the person's ability to communicate with other people. This ability is needed to develop speaking skills because speaking involves an interactive communication with other people. This interaction can be fostered if the teacher uses some activities which are based on the interpersonal intelligence. The intrapersonal intelligence is involved here because it may enable the individual student to reflect upon something and then express himself/herself using the target language. The bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is also involved because it can be used to make students move and act roles while they are speaking.

## Communication Skills

### 1-Introduction

Communication is a very vital process which plays a very important role in our life. This process is not peculiar to human beings only; animals and all other living beings are able to communicate, but in their own ways to achieve their own purposes and satisfy their particular needs. This implies that life will be impossible without communication.

As human beings, we have our own ways of communication: We are able to speak and express ourselves orally. We have many languages which we use to communicate orally. We also have our non-verbal language which is very common among us no matter how different we are from each others. In this regard, human communication is known as *“a special form of communication that occurs between and among people. The connection made among humans through communication involves the use of spoken symbolic language – the words we speak – as well as nonverbal cues such as gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice”* (Redmond, 2000:6).

Communication in a foreign language, either orally or in writing, is the ultimate goal of teaching this foreign language. It is a skill which students are supposed to master to reach some end. In this case it is a means to an end. At the same time, it is an end in itself. Students are required to express themselves in the target language so as to reflect their understanding of the comprehensible input they are exposed to by the teacher. This process could be a problem with the students who are studying English as a foreign language.

### 2-Importance of Communication:

Generally speaking, communication is very important in our human life. As human beings, we need to communicate our own ideas, feelings, and experiences to other people. This makes communication an essential component in our everyday life. In our everyday life we communicate for many reasons: Normally, we communicate in order to satisfy needs, gain information, manage relationships, derive pleasure and entertainment, get self-validation, coordinate and manage tasks, and persuade and gain something from others (Redmond, 2000:8-10).

Besides, mastering communication skills nowadays has become a very important requirement for many jobs. This is very natural because

we are currently living in the age of communication and technology. This idea is emphasized by the employment advertisements which we see in the newspapers or on the Internet. These advertisements require that the applicant should master communication skills. Here are some of the phrases related to communication that have recently appeared in jobs ads in Indianapolis Star and News, The Denver Post, and the Seattle Times: *'Must have strong effective oral and written communication skills'* - *'Outstanding communication skills'* - *'Excellent written and verbal communication, organizational, and supervision skills'* (Redmond, 2000:3).

However, communication is regarded as a severe problem to a lot of people who find it extremely difficult to communicate their own ideas. Those people struggle with this problem because they need to master the communication skills which enable them to succeed in their careers:

“In spite of the increasing importance placed on communication skills, many individuals continue to struggle with this, unable to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively – whether in verbal or written format. This inability makes it nearly impossible for them to compete effectively in the workplace, and stands in the way of career progression” (Fowler, 2004).

### **3-Communication and Speaking:**

In the communication process, we speak in order to convey the message that we have, and in this way, we encode a message. At the same time, we expect the listener to interpret or *decode* this message. In this way, we frame our message and select the linguistic elements to express it so as to arouse in the receiver the meaning we are trying to convey (Rivers, 1981:221).

Recently, the way through which speaking is looked upon has changed a lot. Scholars have begun to focus on the functional aspects of speaking. This has led to expanding the definition of speaking to involve the functional and communicative aspects:

“Definitions of speaking have been expanded. One trend has been to focus on communication activities that reflect a variety of settings: one-to-many, small group, one-to-one, and mass media. Another approach has been to focus on using communication to achieve specific purposes: to inform, to persuade, and to solve problems. A third trend has been to focus on basic competencies needed for everyday life -- for example, giving directions, asking for information, or providing basic information

in an emergency situation. The latter approach has been taken in the "Speech" (Mead, & Rubin, 1985).

Thus we find that the relationship between communication and speaking is embodied in the following points:

- 1-Speaking is a means through which communication takes place.
- 2-In the communication process there is a *message* to be conveyed by someone to another one. This message can be conveyed by speaking.
- 3-By speaking, we form the message to be communicated in a linguistically valid way that can be comprehended by people.
- 4-Communication is always involved in and related to the main four language skills: listening, *speaking*, reading, and writing.
- 5-In teaching English as a foreign language, we develop the students' speaking ability to the point at which they can concentrate on the *message* rather than on the *code* (Chastain, 1976:334) so as to make them communicate meaningfully in English.
- 6-The speaking skill involves more than the superficial learning of grammar and patterns of the language. To be able to speak involves the ability to use the language system for the purpose of communication (Reid, 1977:33).
- 7-Speaking is always used in a functional way so as to achieve real communicative purposes and needs.

Developing oral production or speaking is very difficult in English-non-speaking communities. In these communities English is not used in the outside environment. Therefore, it is discouraged and neglected as students do not use it to achieve real objectives in their lives, and among their family members or friends: "*Developing oral skills is a real challenge for many EFL school teachers since the students do not live in an English speaking environment and most of them attend schools where English is taught as a curricular subject*" (De Porto, 1997:51).

### ***a) What is Speaking?***

It is evident that speaking is a complicated skill because it involves many processes or operations working together. Speaking does not involve the linguistic component only. Yet, it includes other components or elements which make it distinguished as well as a complicated skill. This gives it specificity and importance as far as it is taught. In addition to the linguistic component, speaking involves the social, psychological, cultural components. Speaking is the only skill which needs another person in order to be carried out. The social aspect of speaking is apparent when we deal with another one who may have a different social or cultural background. Therefore, when we define speaking, we should not restrict ourselves to the linguistic component which constitutes only small part of the speaking process.

Florez (1999) defines speaking as “*an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking.*”

This definition is comprehensive to some extent because it emphasizes the interactive nature of speaking as well as the importance of the context in which speaking occurs. This context is represented in the social, psychological, and physical factors that influence speaking.

### ***b) Components of Speaking:***

While we are speaking, the linguistic component is not the only component which is involved in this process. There are many other components involved in speaking. When we speak, we do not pronounce only; we have a message which we want to convey. This message is affected by many factors which are referred to as ‘paralinguistic’. These factors can either be psychological (inside the speaker himself), or social (related to the social environment in which the person interacts).

Many writers emphasize this idea. Hymes (1971) also assumes that second language learners need to know not only the linguistic knowledge but also the culturally acceptable ways of interacting with others in different situations and relationships. To communicate with other people, one is not required to be well-acquainted with the linguistic competence only. “*Canale and Swain (1980) propose that communicative competence*

*includes grammatical competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence” (Shumin, 1997:8).*

El Menoufy (1997:9) states that there are several elements involved in the speaking skill which make it the most difficult skill to teach. This leads it to be neglected by the teacher. These elements are:

- One) Pronunciation or the linguistic knowledge aspect.
- Two) Communicative/interactive ability.
- Three) Style of speech.

Teachers are so much concerned with the first component only. They find it easy to make their students repeat the new words and correct their pronunciation errors. Therefore, they disregard the other two elements which need more effort on the part of the teacher.

Rivers(1981:186) stresses the fact that *“an act of speech involves more than knowledge of the code. It involves the selection of integrated patterns of elements of the code for the expression of an intention, and the assembling of the necessary features without hesitation.”*

This emphasizes the existence of a ‘paralinguistic’ component which is involved in the speaking skill other than the linguistic component; the speaker should keep in mind intention while he is speaking, the vocabulary and structure that he should choose, and the features s/he needs to assemble so as to be fluent while s/he is speaking.

### ***c) Importance of Developing Speaking Skills in the Foreign Language Classroom:***

Speaking is very important inside the classroom. In Egypt, where English is not used as a means of communication among the Egyptian citizens, English is taught as a foreign language. This teaching of English takes a very classical and traditional form which does not allow for the development of the students’ verbal or oral skills. English is practiced only inside the classroom. For this reason, practice should be intensified and given more focus:

“Since most EFL learners learn the target language in their own culture, practice is available only in the classroom. So, a key factor in L2 or foreign language development is the opportunities given to learners to speak in the language-promotion interaction. Teachers must arouse in the learners a willingness and need or reason to speak” (Shumin, 1997:11).

Speaking practice is very important because students cannot learn to speak a foreign language unless they are involved in activities which stimulate them to express themselves in the target language. Rivers (1981:188) considers speaking as a skill which is more demanding on the teacher than any other language skill. Therefore, she advises the teachers to give their students many opportunities to practice speaking.

Since testing English as a foreign language in Egypt takes a written form without using any oral skills, writing in English has been emphasized in Egypt at the expense of speaking. But now the importance of speaking or oral expression “*should be recognized because it has received a great deal of attention from Ministry of Education in Egypt*” (Al-Khuli, 2000:4).

***d) Developing Speaking Skills Needs a Good and Effective Instruction:***

In Egypt, speaking is not given neither adequate nor effective instruction. This is represented in the poor manifestation of the Egyptian students to their speaking skills. In most cases speaking and listening are neglected and not given enough practice in teaching. “Speaking and listening are neglected areas of instruction that should be emphasized more in language arts classes and infused throughout the curriculum”(Cramand, 1993:44).

To teach speaking effectively, a good and effective instruction is needed. Students cannot develop their speaking skills unless the teacher is able to make them use English naturally and properly in the classroom. According to Mostafa (2000:142), the main reasons for the students’ limited speaking skills are shyness, lack of appropriate language, fear of making mistakes, and having nothing to say.

Most of these reasons are psychological in the first place. For example, when a student is shy, he is not expected to speak up and express himself freely in the classroom even if he has a good linguistic competence. Similarly, when another student is afraid of making mistakes in front of his teacher or his classmates, he is not expected to speak fluently even if he has good vocabulary and structure.

Therefore, the point here is that delivering a sufficient instruction in the linguistic competence is not enough. Teachers should keep in mind the psychological aspects of the learners which are involved in the learning process. For example, they should put into consideration the individual differences among their students. They should also keep in mind the learning styles by which they learn the same content. Students

are different from one another. Some students may learn English more quickly while others seem to struggle (El Naggar, 2000:14).

Effective instruction should give equal importance and concentration to the four language skills. Yet, *“active instruction in speaking is also de-emphasized in the schools. It has been estimated that only 10% of instruction time is devoted to teaching speaking skills”*(Cramand, 1993:44).

Therefore, there is a bad need to modify our instruction in a way that encourages students to speak English freely: First of all, teachers of English should change the students attitude towards speaking. Many students think that acquiring a foreign language necessitates that they should sit silently all the time listening passively to the teacher. Many other students are afraid of making mistakes. Therefore, *“the teacher’s role in assisting the students in perfecting their performance skills is one of fostering the proper students’ attitudes for productive participation in communicative speech activities and of providing activities for this type of practice”* (Chastain, 1976:335).

Secondly, teachers should direct their instruction in a way that develops three main items: Form, meaning, and fluency. Considering one item only is not sufficient for the students who need to master all the three items simultaneously: *“(1) Form-focused instruction, that is, attention to details of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and so forth; (2) meaning-focused instruction, that is, opportunities to produce meaningful spoken messages with real communicative purposes; and (3) opportunities to improve fluency. Elements of all of the above items should be present throughout a speaking program, with emphasis on form-focused instruction at the elementary levels and, as the learners progress, on meaning-focused instruction at the higher levels”* (Brown & Paul Nation, 1997).

Thirdly, Teachers should expose their students to the English language as much as possible so as to enable them to talk freely and easily. Learning to speak will be facilitated when students are actively engaged in communication in the target language (Nunan, 1991:51). *“A possible way of stimulating learners to talk might be to provide them with extensive exposure to authentic language through audio-visual stimuli and with opportunities to use the language”* (Shumin, 1997:11).

#### ***4-Difficulties of Speaking in the Classroom:***

There are many reasons for the difficulties which teachers and students find with teaching speaking in the classroom. Teachers do not encourage students to speak English properly in the classroom. The following quotation may be the best description of the problem of speaking English in the Egyptian classroom: Al-Khuli (2000:16) notes that speaking is generally discouraged in EFL classes and schools for speaking in class is used only when students are called upon to repeat or recall an answer, and therefore, silence is one of the characteristics of English language classroom. Students are active listeners and passive speakers. As a result, oral production of the target language is almost absent in English classes.

Some teachers find it frustrating to carry out oral activities in the English class because when encouraged to speak, students speak perfunctorily without being really involved. They lose their patience quickly and their attention is not captured (Bailey, 1999:37).

The difficulties and problems which students find while trying to speak or talk may be stated as follows: First of all, it is naturally difficult for students to speak in the foreign language they are learning. Brown and Yule (1993) claimed that "*learning to talk in the foreign language is often considered to be one of the most difficult aspects of language learning to help students with*" (Brown and Yule, 1993:25).

Secondly, the teaching conditions that students are involved in can impede the development of their speaking skills. These conditions may be represented in "*the number of students in the classroom, the time allowed, the quality of textbooks, and examination system which does not give considerable importance to the spoken language*" (Byrne, 1995:10).

Thirdly, the teachers' methods of teaching can hinder the oral ability of their students. Some studies conducted on speaking concluded that the traditional methods of teaching which focus on lecturing rather than practice were the main cause of the students' oral inability. "*They suggested that importance and concern on teachers' pedagogical techniques and their attitudes inside the EFL classes should be placed*" (Al-Khuli, 2000:3).

Fourthly, students have passive attitudes towards English, particularly in Egypt. They are reluctant to participate in the speaking activities inside the classroom. In Egypt "*the students use the English language neither in the classroom nor outside it and so they see no reason for learning it*" (Seleim, 1998:150). The general attitude of the students towards English in Egypt does not encourage them to take an active role of participation inside the classroom.

Fifthly, there are psychological factors that may passively influence the students' performances in speaking. Speaking is often 'anxiety-provoking'. Students may feel extreme anxiety when they are exposed to new or unexpected situations in which they may be required to use new words. Besides, students may be afraid of making mistakes because they may think that errors would be an indication of ignorance (Shumin, 1997:8).

### ***5-MI-Based Instruction and Speaking Skills:***

Acquiring or learning language is not a one-way street; it does not depend solely on the direct instruction delivered by the teacher. There are many other vital components which are involved in this too complicated process:

“Language learning is a two-way street. Learners, and all the mental and physical machinery they come with, comprise one dimension. The environment, including the teacher, the classroom, and the surrounding community, is the other” (Burt & Delay, 1983:38).

To develop their speaking skills in English, students need an effective environment which enables them to speak and interact with each other freely; that is to say, classroom environment should encourage students to speak up and participate in speaking activities without feeling anxious, threatened or stressed:

“Children acquire a second language in a socially stimulating environments where freedom and flexibility to interact and meet a wide variety of needs are fostered. The social and interactive nature of language is an integral aspect of language acquisition that allows the learners to evolve as they collaborate and negotiate meaning, problem solve, and think critically” (Poole, 2000:535).

It has been found that basing instruction on Multiple Intelligences Theory “enables us to discuss positive strengths in all children and to plan appropriate learning strategies for a more effective classroom environment” (El Naggar, 2000:25).

This effective environment cannot be provided under the traditional mode of instruction. The main reason for that is that this traditional mode treats students in a uniform way. This does not give equal opportunities for students to speak. The students who are dominant in the speaking practice are those who are linguistically-talented only. Thus, many other students who are talented in other areas are deprived from sharing and taking an active role in the classroom.

MI-Based Instruction provides both the teacher and the learners with the suitable environment for developing the speaking skills. This environment should be characterized by being more natural and more encouraging than the traditional classroom environment. *“The MI classroom offers a holistic, integrated, stimulating, multi-modal, and cooperative learning environment for all children”* (Poole, 2000:11). This environment allows students to be more active and more involved in learning.

Another point is that students are motivated when they are more involved in the learning process. They are also motivated when they receive instruction which enables them to be reflective about their own learning (Schaller and Callison, 1996:2). Modifying instruction in the light of MI Theory enables students to be active while they are learning. This is required for teaching speaking because it requires that students should be active and responsive. This is needed so as to achieve the maximum benefit of teaching a foreign language. Research conducted on teaching speaking suggests that *“learning to speak in a second or foreign language will be facilitated when students are actively engaged in attempting to communicate”* (Nunan, 1991:51).

Another point is that students’ individual differences and learning styles should be taken into consideration as far as effective teaching is required. *“Gardner suggests that not only do all humans have multiple intelligences, but we have different strengths in each intelligence area which make each individual uniquely different from each other”* (Poole, 2000:10). Since students learn differently, it is not fair to teach them in the same way. Teachers need to provide their students with a range of learning options and activities to cope with their individual differences and learning styles (Nunan, 1971:170).

Teachers’ knowledge and mastery of the content they are teaching is not sufficient for effective teaching. *“Effective teaching requires a thorough understanding of the learning process, characteristics of students at different stages of development, individual differences, factors that influence motivation, and procedures for maintaining orderly classrooms”* (Eggen & Kauhak, 1994:545).

Consequently, instruction should be based on the individual learners rather than on the teacher. When individual learners are put into consideration, teaching will reach more students. That is to say, there should be a learner-centered instruction which considers the students’ backgrounds while learning is taking place.

A learner-centered classroom enforces teaching English in general, and teaching the speaking skill in particular. When the students find that their personalities, including their needs and interests, are put into consideration, they will be willing to speak and communicate inside the classroom. *“In a learner-centered environment, students become autonomous learners, which accelerates the language learning process. A learner-centered environment is communicative and authentic. It trains students to work in small groups or pairs and to negotiate meaning in a broad context. The negotiation of meaning develops students’ communicative competence”* (Altan and Christine, 2001).

In the learner-centered classroom, students learn in an encouraging environment which is characterized by being relaxing and non-threatening. In such a classroom, the teacher provides the students with multiple opportunities to communicate with other individuals (Poole, 2000:14-15). This environment is provided by MI-Based Instruction which cares for the individual student and provides him with many options and alternatives for learning. Besides, it fosters learning by creating the encouraging environment that is necessary for developing the speaking skills. It is supposed that this kind of instruction will allow for the effective classroom atmosphere which involves all the students in the learning process and cares for their personalities.

## **Learning Styles and Learning Strategies:**

### **1-Introduction:**

Generally speaking, it is a well-known fact in human life that people are different from each others. No two persons, even the identical twins, are the same in every thing. Each human personality is as unique as the finger print. Each individual has his own nature, his own moods, temperaments, personal traits, characteristics, ways of thinking and so many other things which can never be possessed by another individual in the same way or to the same degree.

Based on this fact, there are many styles through which people can learn or understand anything around them. Educationally speaking, students differ in the way they perceive or learn a new content because they have different and contrasting learning styles which determine the way through which they learn. These learning styles should be put into consideration by the teachers so as to reach more students in the teaching-learning process:

“Research on learning styles, on the other hand, has provided teachers with a different view of learning and demonstrated how to apply it to classroom teaching. An awareness of individual differences in learning

has made ESL/EFL educators and program designers more sensitive to their roles in teaching and learning and has permitted them to match teaching and learning styles so as to develop students' potentials in second and foreign language learning" (Kang, 1999:6).

## **2-Definition:**

There are many definitions for learning styles:

1-*"Learning styles refer to an individual's natural preferred way of absorbing, processing and remembering new information and skills that persist regardless of teaching methods, culture or subject"* (Gold, 2002).

2-According to Reid (1995:viii), learning styles refer to *"an individual's natural, habitual and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills."*

3-*"Learning styles are internally-based characteristics of individuals for the intake or understanding of new information"* (Kang, 1999:6).

These previous definitions agree on that learning styles refer to the preferred way(s) through which an individual processes or understands any information that he receives.

## **3-Categories of Learning Styles:**

Reid (1995:x) categorizes styles of young learners as follows:

1-*Auditory learner:* Learns more effectively through the ear (hearing). This style resembles the verbal/linguistic intelligence that deals with language and words which are to be heard by our ears.

2-*Visual learner:* Learns more effectively through the eyes (seeing). Again this style resembles the visual/spatial intelligence which deals with what can be seen by the eyes.

3-*Tactile Learner:* Learns more effectively through hands-on experience (touch).

4-*Kinesthetic learner:* Learns more effectively through correct body experience (whole-body movement). This style resembles the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence which involves using the body and movement.

This implies that, during the learning process, students, unconsciously, prefer to use some senses and neglect others. Some students, for example, prefer to hear or listen to the teacher while they are learning. In this case, their dominant learning style is the auditory learning style. As a result, these students prefer lecturing, as a teaching style, and tend to learn best when they listen to speech delivered by the teacher. Consequently, they remember what has been said by the teacher in a very strong way:

“When learning a language, the ears, eyes and hands are all actively involved. Some learners prefer using one sensory channel over the others, while some students prefer using a mixture of all three channels. Students with greater learning-style flexibility are also greater achievers, as they are able to process information in whatever way it is presented” (Gold, 2002).

#### **4-Learning Strategies:**

The idea of learning strategies is closely related to learning styles. Now that students have different learning styles, they can be presented with different learning strategies that involve them in difficult and demanding tasks. Learning strategies are defined as “ *the actions or behaviours students use to try to improve their learning*” (El Naggar, 2002:19).

O’Malley and Chamot (1990:196) classify learning strategies into three main types which are:

1-*Meta-cognitive Strategies*: Planning, monitoring, and evaluating one’s learning.

2-*Cognitive Strategies*: Making mental or physical images, grouping, taking notes.

3-*Social/Affective Strategies*: Interacting with others, co-operating, asking questions.

Teachers should provide students with various and different learning strategies so as to encourage them to learn and get more involved in the learning process. These strategies can help students do difficult tasks which require learners to exert more effort:

“Teachers should also consciously develop students’ learning strategies to help students approach challenging learning tasks. For example, teachers can let students use cognitive strategies such as note-taking and summarizing to sort and organize language information and prepare them for speech and written production” (Kang, 1999:9).

Such learning strategies can be used by the teacher when s/he uses MI-Based Instruction. Under MI-Based Instruction, many learning strategies which are based on the students’ multiple intelligences can be used. For example, the teacher can use personal connection and self-expression as two learning strategies which are based on the *intrapersonal intelligence*. In the same way, s/he can use verbal interaction and writing reports as two learning strategies which are based on the *verbal-linguistic intelligence*.

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