AN EVALUATION OF THE IRANIAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS, "ENGLISH TIME BOOKS" AND "HIP-HIP HOORAY" BOOKS BASED ON MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE THEORY

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ABSTRACT

Although most English teachers try to consider their student's expectations in designing the structural syllabus, finally it is the textbook that defines the frameworks and in some cases the curriculum of institutes and English teaching classes. In this study popular textbooks in Junior high school and English teaching Institutes are evaluated from MI perspective. The researchers in the present study tried to analyze some English textbooks and identified how much each textbook considers different kinds of intelligences. On the other hand, by knowing the strengths and weaknesses of currently used books, teachers can use the complementary materials or teaching skills .When the potential of the books is evaluated from the perspective of MI, the advantages and shortcomings of the books are identified. Altogether there are some positive points in each of these books .So authors should have these points in mind that they can design some new versions of the books in which they have used the advantages of mentioned books .In this way ,they can increase MI variety as much as possible.

Keywords: Multiple intelligence (MI), educational program, textbook, English language teaching, individual differences.

INTRODUCTION

In this study popular textbooks in Junior high school and English teaching Institutes are evaluated from MI perspective .With the appearance of communicative teaching method in the realm of teaching English language, individual differences became more important than what they were in the past. Although individual differences discussion has different dimensions, one of its most important dimensions in the realm of education in general and foreign language teaching in particular is intelligence.

This study is going to analyze some English textbooks and identify how much each textbook considers different kinds of MI in this perspective. So it can help teachers to utilize the textbooks which are appropriate according to student's requirements. On the other hand, by knowing the strengths and weaknesses of currently used books, teachers can use the complementary materials or teaching skills. The researcher in this study answered the following three questions:

1. Are there any differences between junior high school English textbooks and English books in applying different kinds of intelligences proposed in MI theory?
2. Are there any differences between junior high school English textbooks and Hip Hip Hooray books in applying different kinds of intelligences proposed in MI theory?

3. Are there any differences between Hip Hip Hooray books and English Time books in applying different kinds of intelligences proposed in MI theory?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

MI theory is a dynamic construction that considers intelligences as tools which are changeable and trainable: "while traditional intelligence tests are based on the notion that the general faculty of intelligence is an inborn attribute that does not change over time ,the MI theory asserts that there are skills universal to human species, related to the culture nurturing that domain and develop according to experience, age and training" (Armstrong 2002: 11). Thus, Gardner's model of multiple intelligences is a reaction against a conservative and totally biologically driven view which would encourage students to see intelligence as fixed and which could therefore make putting out special effort to achieve academic goal seem not worthwhile.

Constant evaluation of textbooks enables us to make informed decisions through which student achievement will increase and educational programs will be more successful. As Sheldon (1988) stated, there are several reasons for the evaluation of textbooks. ELT textbooks can be motivating for the learners and can enhance the teacher's effectiveness; nevertheless, they may have some disadvantages.

METHODOLOGY

As stated before, the research at hand aims at analyzing current widely used textbooks in Iran in order to know if they respond to MI theory, to what extent they engage MI theory and to what extent they are comparable in terms of applying the theory. In order to accomplish these goals, the researchers selected three series of English textbooks – namely junior high school textbooks, English Time Series, and Hip-Hip Hooray Series – that are widely being used in Iranian context and then we analyzed each activity in the books in order to know the percentage of activities that engage each of the eight intelligences.

Besides, junior high school textbooks which are extensively used in Iranian junior high schools, the researcher selected two other textbooks by surveying Iranian private language institutes in order to identify which textbooks are currently being used in several cities all over Iran. English Time Series have been chosen since it is widely used in different private institutes in Iran and Hip-Hip Hooray Series have been chosen since they are approved by the Ministry of Education and are used as the core material in English institutes. The textbooks were analyzed to determine if MI is included in those books and to identify the intelligence profile of the books. The researcher identified which intelligences were included, which intelligences were predominant and which ones were less common or not included in these three textbooks.

Iranian junior high school textbooks include three textbooks, each for a grade, without any additional components. English Time series textbooks include six sets of student's books and workbooks. Hip-Hip Hooray series textbooks include eight sets of student's books and workbooks. Each of these textbooks is accompanied with a Super CD component which functions as an additional repertoire of go-home exercises. Since the number of these textbooks is not so extensive, the researcher has focused on all levels of the textbooks to analyze them.

Textbooks are analyzed by identifying the intelligences included in each activity in the three books chosen including extra activities. Review units for vocabulary and grammar references were not included in the data. After collecting the data, the results were analyzed.

The units in the three textbooks analyzed are divided in sections, which are usually labeled clearly. The sections vary from one book to the other; however, they usually refer to the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) as well as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation practice. The sections are usually divided in several exercises. In some sections, there is a different combination of four skills, i.e. listening/speaking or reading/writing. For the purpose of this study's data collection, the sections described were considered as "activities"; however, in order to facilitate data collection the exercises in the sections were considered to be the unit of data collection.

In order to identify the intelligences in each activity in the textbooks, a list was created with possible activities and techniques used in language teaching as well as a description of each intelligence.

RESULTS

The researcher has studied the exercises one by one. The whole number of exercises was counted; the number of exercises which contained multiple intelligences was counted in each unit, too .The data were put in several charts. Finally the number of each intelligence in each series of books was counted. At this stage there is one chart for each series - one chart for Junior high school books, one for English Time books and one for Hip-Hip Hooray books.

After counting the number of each intelligence in these three series of books separately, the researcher considered one table for each intelligence to compare the   books from the perspective of applying one specific intelligence. In order to identify the proportion of that intelligence in each series of books, the chi square test was run.

The first intelligence which has been compared was verbal/ linguistic intelligence:

Table 1. Number * group Cross tabulation verbal linguistic

			Group			Total
			English Time	Hip-Hip Hooray	Junior high school book	
Number	yes	Count	2106	1339	370	3815
		Expected Count	2079.5	1375.0	360.5	3815.0
		% within number	55.2%	35.1%	9.7%	100.0%
	No	Count	28	72	0	100
		Expected Count	54.5	36.0	9.5	100.0
		% within number	28.0%	72.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	2134	1411	370	3915
		Expected Count	2134.0	1411.0	370.0	3915.0
		% within number	54.5%	36.0%	9.5%	100.0%

Table 2. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	59.746[a]	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	63.876	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.838	1	.009
N of Valid Cases	3915		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.45.

According to the above table, as it is observed, the significance level of 0.000 shows that there is a significant difference between the three series of books regarding their incorporation of verbal/linguistic intelligence. It means that these books are different from each other in applying verbal/linguistic intelligence.

The same process has been repeated regarding other intelligences. For mathematical intelligence the significance level is more than .05.It means that all of these books are the same from the perspective of applying mathematical intelligence. None of the books had intrapersonal intelligence in their activities. Except intrapersonal and naturalistic intelligences, significance level for other intelligences is less than 0.05.It can be concluded that the books are different from each other in applying these intelligences. At the next stage to answer the research questions each two series of books have been compared.

Research Questions

Are there any differences between Junior high school and English Time books from the perspective of applying multiple intelligences?

To answer this question these data have been put in group cross tabulation. This time Junior high school and English Time books have been compared from the perspective of multiple intelligence theory.

After counting the number of each intelligence in English Time and Junior high school books, the researcher put the data in group cross tabulation and then applied Chi-square test in order to obtain the significance level. As it is mentioned, all the books were the same in applying intrapersonal and naturalistic intelligences. So they have been compared regarding their applying of other intelligences. A separate table is considered for each intelligence. As an example, one of them is mentioned here:

Table 3. Number * group Cross tabulation (ling)

			Group		Total
			English Time book	Junior high schoolbook	
Number	Yes	Count	2106	370	2476
		Expected Count	2110.1	365.9	2476.0
		% within number	85.1%	14.9%	100.0%
	No	Count	28	0	28
		Expected Count	23.9	4.1	28.0
		% within number	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	2134	370	2504
		Expected Count	2134.0	370.0	2504.0
		% within number	85.2%	14.8%	100.0%

Table 4. Chi-Square Tests (ling)

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.910[a]	1	.027		
Continuity Correction[b]	3.795	1	.051		
Likelihood Ratio	9.009	1	.003		
Fisher's Exact Test				.027	.011
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.908	1	.027		
N of Valid Cases	2504				

a. 1 cell (25.0%) has expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.14.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

According to the above table, the significance level of .027 shows that there is a significance difference between these two series of books regarding their incorporation of verbal/ linguistic intelligence.

The same process has been repeated regarding other intelligences. For mathematical intelligence the significance level is more than .05.It means that all of these books are the same from the perspective of applying mathematical intelligence. None of the books had intrapersonal intelligence in their activities. Except intrapersonal and naturalistic intelligences, significance level for other intelligences is less than 0.05.It can be concluded that the books are different from each other in applying these intelligences.

4-1-2 Are there any differences between Junior high school and Hip-Hip Hooray books from the perspective of applying multiple intelligences?

To answer this question the data have been put in group cross tabulation. This time Junior high school and Hip-Hip Hooray books have been compared from the perspective of multiple intelligence theory. As separate table is considered for each intelligence. As it can be observed from the following tables, Hip-Hip Hooray and Junior high school books have been compared from the perspective of linguistic intelligence.

Table 5. Number * group Cross tabulation (linguistic intelligence)

			group		Total
			Hip-Hip Hooray	Junior high school book	
Number	Yes	Count	1339	370	1709
		Expected Count	1354.0	355.0	1709.0
		% within Number	78.3%	21.7%	100.0%
	No	Count	72	0	72
		Expected Count	57.0	15.0	72.0
		% within Number	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	1411	370	1781
		Expected Count	1411.0	370.0	1781.0
		% within Number	79.2%	20.8%	100.0%

Table 6. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.676[a]	1	.000		
Continuity Correction[b]	18.382	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	34.322	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	19.665	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	1781				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14.96.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

As is observed, the significance level of .000 shows that there is a significant difference between these two series of books regarding their incorporation of verbal/ linguistic intelligence. According to the proportion of applying   linguistic intelligence in these two series of books it can be stated that Junior high school book has acted much better than Hip-Hip Hooray.

The same process has been repeated regarding other intelligences. For mathematical intelligence the significance level is more than .05.It means that all of these books are the same from the perspective of applying mathematical intelligence. None of the books had intrapersonal intelligence in their activities. Except intrapersonal and naturalistic intelligences, significance level for other intelligences is less than 0.05.It can be concluded that the books are different from each other in applying these intelligences.

4-1-3 Are there any differences between English Time and Hip-Hip Hooray books from the perspective of applying multiple intelligences?

To answer this question the data have been put in group cross tabulation. This time Hip-Hip Hooray and English Time books have been compared from the perspective of multiple intelligence theory .A separate table is considered for each intelligence. As it can be observed from the following tables, Hip-Hip Hooray and English Time books have been compared from the perspective of linguistic intelligence.

Table 7. Number * group Cross tabulation (linguistic intelligence)

			Group		Total
			English Time	Hip-Hip Hooray	
Number	Yes	Count	2106	1339	3445
		Expected Count	2073.8	1371.2	3445.0
		% within Number	61.1%	38.9%	100.0%
	No	Count	28	72	100
		Expected Count	60.2	39.8	100.0
		% within Number	28.0%	72.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	2134	1411	3545
		Expected Count	2134.0	1411.0	3545.0
		% within Number	60.2%	39.8%	100.0%

Table 8. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	44.523[a]	1	.000		
Continuity Correction[b]	43.151	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	43.749	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	44.510	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	3545				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 39.80.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

As is observed, the significance level of .000 shows that there is a significance difference between these two series of books regarding their incorporation of verbal/ linguistic intelligence. According to the proportion of applying linguistic intelligence in these two series of books it can be stated that English Time has acted better than Hip-Hip Hooray book.

The same process has been repeated regarding other intelligences. For mathematical intelligence the significance level is more than .05.It means that all of these books are the same from the perspective of applying mathematical intelligence. None of the books had intrapersonal intelligence in their activities. Except intrapersonal and naturalistic intelligences, significance level for other intelligences is less than 0.05.It can be concluded that the book At this stage it is understood that all of these books are different from each other in applying MI. The following table shows the percentage of using MI in the books. (The table of percentage)

Table 9. The percentage of using all of the different MI in the books under study

Book name	Linguistic intelligence	Bodily intelligence	Spatial intelligence	Mathematical intelligence	Intrapersonal intelligence	Interpersonal intelligence	Naturalistic intelligence	Musical intelligence
English Time	98	16	58	03	0	17	0	10
Junior high school	100	005	39	02	0	04	0	06
Hip-Hip Hooray	94	03	69	02	0	14	009	10

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As it is observed from the obtained results, although the junior school books have a high percentage of linguistic intelligence they have the lowest variety of MI among others. They do not have the capability of including a combination of intelligences.

The two other books under investigation have used the combination of multiple intelligences. But the proportion of this combination is different. For example as it can be observed Hip-Hip Hooray has applied more visual/spatial intelligences in its exercises than English Time .But English Time has applied more verbal/linguistic, bodily/kinesthetic and interpersonal intelligences than Hip-Hip Hooray .These two books have been approximately equal in using

mathematical and musical intelligences .Intrapersonal intelligence has not been used in any of these books.

When the potential of the books are evaluated from the perspective of MI, the advantages and weak points of the books are identified. Altogether there are some positive points in each of these books .So authors should have these points in mind that they can design some new versions of the books in which they can increase MI variety as much as possible.

It is worth mentioning here that it is not easy to apply all intelligences in ELT textbooks. Some of them like musical or interpersonal intelligences can be applied easily but some others like naturalistic intelligence cannot be applied easily in these books. To compensate the shortcomings of the books in this regard some points have been mentioned. Different kinds of intelligences can be applied for individual exercises .It means that there is not one way for applying MI. This can be possible through using complementary exercises in books other than the ones which are taught in the classroom.

There are a lot of books which are taught in Iranian institutes and the researcher could not evaluate all of them. The students' capabilities from the perspective of multiple intelligence are not known, because each person is different from others and it is not so easy to identify them. All teachers are not familiar with the theory of MI, so they do not know how to apply it in their teaching.

It is expected from other researchers to expand this study with other books in this perspective .Some tests should be taken from students to identify their abilities in different intelligences. Since all the students in Iran will also have English textbooks in high school, it will be applicable to do some evaluation and compare the Junior high school and high school English textbooks. So some points would be added to improve the educational features of these books and some others would be changed to make them more effective.

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