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Research Article

Effect of Task-Based Teaching (TBT) on Syntax Learning: With Focus on Multiple Intelligences

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated the impact of task-based instruction on the learning of syntax by learners possessing different intelligences. Forty eight intermediate EFL learners were assigned to an experimental and a control group, both of which took a teacher-made grammar test of 40 items and the Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scale (MIDAS). The students in the experimental group were taught based on task-based teaching of grammar and the controls through the traditional teaching of grammar. Following 20 sessions of instruction, both groups took a grammar test of 40 items to assess their level of achievement. The results of the t-test analysis indicated that task-based instruction significantly improved the learners' knowledge of syntax compared to the traditional instruction. That is, the experimental group receiving task-based instruction outperformed the control group on the posttest of syntactic knowledge. The results are discussed with reference to the current theories of teaching and learning grammar.
Key Terms: Task-Based Teaching (TBT), Syntax, Multiple Intelligences

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, task-based language instruction has received increasing recognition. Task based language learning was defined by Breen (1987) as "any structured language learning attempt which has a particular objective, appropriate content, a specified working procedure, and a range of outcomes for those who undertake the task" (p.23). Task-based teaching employs communicative tasks as the basic unit of analysis for motivating syllabus design and second language (L2) classroom activities. Task in this review refers to a range of work plans that have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning from the simple and brief exercise type, to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem solving or simulations and decision making. Task-based instruction (TBI) is frequently promoted as an effective teaching approach, superior to 'traditional' methods, and soundly based in theory and research. The approach is often justified by the claim that linguistic regularities are acquired through 'noticing' during communicative activity, and should therefore be addressed primarily by incidental 'focus on form' during task performance.

The overall purpose of task-based methodology is to create opportunities for language learning and skill development through collaborative knowledge building, pair and group work are seen as central to task-based teaching. Task-based teaching has typically based itself on group/pair work, other structure, i.e. students working independently and teacher-centered activities, including peer teaching, are also available.

Task-based teaching is associated with humanistic language teaching. Humanistic principles of education emphasize the achievement of students' full potential for growth by acknowledging the importance of the affective dimension in learning as well as the cognitive. Humanistic approaches encourage learners to recognize their feelings and put them to use by caring for and sharing with others, thereby increasing their own self-esteem and their motivation to learn. Task-based teaching has typically based itself on group/pair work, other structure, i.e. students working independently and teacher-centered activities, including peer teaching, are also available. Pair and group work are seen as central to task-based teaching. 'Task' is a pedagogical unit that can be used as a basis for designing language courses (Long and Crookes 1992). By specifying what tasks are to be used course designers can create blueprints for the kinds of language use that will foster language development.

In advocating the use of task work in language teaching, the assumption is that learners will develop not only communicative skills but also an acceptable standard of performance through task work. Task work is not intended to promote development of a nonstandard form of English but is seen as part of the process by which linguistic and communicative competence is developed.

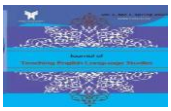
To fulfill the purpose of this study which is to find out the effect of task-based the learning of syntax by learners with different intelligences, the following questions are raised:

RQ1: *Do task-based instruction and traditional instruction differentially affect Iranian EFL learners' learning of syntax?*

RQ2: *Do Iranian EFL learners with different intelligence types differentially learn syntax?*

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Task-based learning and teaching is a development on CLT (communicative language teaching) in that it lays emphasis on the design of tasks and the development of task-based teaching. Willis & Willis (2007) state that "we create tasks to facilitate meaningful activities in the classroom, tasks are not a substitute for interesting topics which engage learners' interest, but they can enhance that engagement and interest" (p.121). They point out that a task should be central to language learning. This means that in order to promote language development we should provide a rich diet of activities which focus on meaning. We should not allow form-focused activities to detract from a focus on meaning. If we have spent time presenting and practicing specific forms immediately before introducing a task, then it is likely that learners will be concerned to display the target forms rather than to concentrate on getting their messages



across. The task is likely to become a further practice of form activity. This suggests that learners should complete a task cycle before the teacher isolates specific forms for study. Learners are then more likely to use a far wider repertoire of language to express themselves during the task; they will deploy whatever language they have already learnt from earlier lessons, and experiment with language they are not sure of in order to get their meanings across" (Willis & Willis, 2007, p.113).

Task-Based Learning is characterized by various factors: a focus on fluency, a high degree of learner autonomy, review of previously learnt language, and the importance of relevancy. Through task-based activities we can motivate students to use English to communicate in the real world (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). A task-based communicative activity involves students accomplishing the task with the target language (Richards and Rogers, 2001), and the focus is not only on the product, but also on the process of learning. Students are expected to acquire new vocabulary words and practice listening and speaking skills throughout the task.

The role of grammar is perhaps one of the most controversial issues in language teaching. In the early parts of the twentieth century, grammar teaching formed an essential part of language instruction, so much so that other aspects of language learning were either ignored or downplayed. The argument was that if you knew the grammatical rules of the language, you would be able to use it for communication. This concept was strongly challenged in the early 1970s. Knowledge of the grammatical system of the language, it was argued, was but one of the many components which underlay the notion of communicative competence. To be considered a competent user of a language, one needs to know not only the rules of grammar, but also how the rules are used in real communication.

In recent years, teaching of grammar has regained its rightful place in the language curriculum. People now agree that grammar is too important to be ignored, and that without a good knowledge of grammar, learners' language development will be severely constrained.

Most current approaches to TBT certainly recognize the importance of grammar. Hatch (1978) argues that "the process of learning how to interact entails the process of learning grammar" (p.404). Today task-based activities are almost always followed by one or more form-focused activity. Many traditional methodologies begin by teaching grammatical forms and then go on to set communicative activities in which they believe learners will be able to use those forms. The initial aim of TBT is to encourage learners to engage in meaning with the language resources they already have. This makes learners acutely aware of what they need to learn. They are then given form-focused activities to help them develop that language. They may later do a repeat task which gives them the opportunity to incorporate some of the language they have focused on at an earlier stage. Task is a tool for engaging learners in meaning-making and thereby for creating the conditions for language acquisition. The various theories are agreed on another point—in addition to, and in the process of making meaning, learners need to attend to and become aware of linguistic form.

The status of grammar-focused teaching or, as it is currently referred to, form-focused instruction has undergone a major reassessment since the 1970s. the advent of communicative language teaching ostensibly saw the demise of grammar-based instruction: Grammatical syllabuses were superseded by communicative ones based on functions or tasks; grammar-based methodologies such as the Presentation-Practice-Production(P-P-P) lesson format underlying the Situational Approach gave way to function- and skill-based teaching; and accuracy activities such as drills and grammar practice were replaced by fluency activities based on interactive small-group work. This led to the emergence of a 'fluency-first' pedagogy (Brumfit, 1979) in which students' grammar needs are determined on the basis of their performance on fluency tasks rather than predetermined by a grammatical syllabus.

Ellis (2003) believes that "without attention to form learners' interlanguages may stabilize and fossilization set in. Learners who use their strategic competence to overcome their linguistic limitations and who are thereby able to participate adequately in meaning-making situations may lose the motivation

to attend to form and, thus, cease to learn; thus, the goal of pedagogy is not just to provide opportunities for meaning-making but also to ensure that learners are motivated to attend to form—to notice new linguistic features in the input and to work with their interlocutors to construct new zone of proximal development. Again, 'task' is seen as the ideal tool for achieving a focus on form. By manipulating the design features of a task and/or implementational procedures, learners can be encouraged to attend to form in the context of meaning-making" (p.319).

The main advantages of TBL are that language is used for a genuine purpose meaning that real communication should take place, and that at the stage where the learners are preparing their report for the whole class, they are forced to consider language form in general rather than concentrating on a single form (as in the PPP model). Whereas the aim of the PPP model is to lead from accuracy to fluency, the aim of TBL is to integrate all four skills and to move from fluency to accuracy plus fluency. The range of tasks available (reading texts, listening texts, problem-solving, role-plays, questionnaires, etc) offers a great deal of flexibility in this model and should lead to more motivating activities for the learners.

According to Ellis (2003), current second language acquisition theories view grammar learning as best accomplished when learners are primarily focused on meaning rather than form. However, these theories also claim that some attention to form is necessary for learning to take place. For this reason, they need meaning-based tasks that also allow them the opportunity to process language as form. One approach to teaching language that has attracted a lot of attention over the past twenty-five years is a task-based approach to learning and teaching. In task-based approaches, the focus of classroom activities is on the task, and ultimately on meaning. In a flexible model for task-based learning, learners begin by carrying out a communicative task, without specific focus on form. After they have done the task, they report and discuss how they accomplished this, perhaps listening to a fluent speaker doing the same task. Only at the end is there a specific focus on features of language form.

With the advent of humanism in the 1960s, 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. In this case, intelligence has been the concern of educators, professional teachers, syllabus designer, and psycholinguists while they have been looking for any possible match between intelligence and the ability to learn a foreign language. The traditional definition of intelligence is now regarded too narrow; so a change of attitude has taken place regarding intelligence as a linguistic and logic-mathematical concept. This change is based largely on the work of Howard Gardner, educational psychologist and creator of the theory of multiple intelligences.

Educators and professional teachers, syllabus designer, and psycholinguists have for long been concerned with making an appropriate match between intelligence and ability to learn foreign languages. So far, many researchers have denied the very existence of any relationship between intelligence and the ability to learn foreign languages (Vaezi, 1995, Forouzande, 1999).

Most teachers and instructors in Iran teach a foreign language to all the students in the same way, while language learners in our classes are unique in their personalities, intelligence, and cultural experiences and values. Educators, teachers, psychologists, and specially syllabus designers have been looking for any possible relationship between intelligence and the ability to learn a second language.

Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) provides a theoretical foundation for recognizing the different abilities and talents of the students. This theory acknowledged that while all students may not be verbally or mathematically gifted, they may have an expertise in other areas. Since the publication of MI, Gardner and others have continued to research the theory and its implications for education, curriculum development, teaching and assessment. In spite of increasing popularity of research on MI, the relationship between MI and different skills and sub skills of language is still a new research area in Iran.

Armstrong (2000) believes that MI theory opens the door to a wide variety of teaching strategies that can be easily implemented in the classroom. He suggests that all learners have different tendencies in all the eight intelligences, so any particular strategy is likely to be highly successful with one group of students and less successful with other groups.

The primary goal for the implementation of MI theory advocated by Howard Gardner (1999) is that instruction and curriculum should be personalized so that students may use their intellectual strengths as a means to achieve greater academic and personal success.

This need is also viewed in Iran. Little has been done for the implementation of task-based teaching. The result of this study may be of help to the teachers to help the learners learn the target language effectively. This study tended to search and fid the effect of task-based instruction on syntactic achievement of Iranian EFL learners, to maximize their learning. This study would help teachers gain knowledge of teaching grammar through tasks options and consequently facilitate syntactic achievement.

Gardner (1993) proposed a new view of intelligence that is rapidly being incorporated in school curricula. In his theory multiple intelligences, Gardner expanded the concept of intelligence to also include such area as music, special relations, and interpersonal knowledge in addition to mathematical and linguistic ability. Teaching strategies informed by MI theory can transfer some control from teacher to learners by giving students choices in the ways they will learn and demonstrate their learning. By focusing on problem-solving activities that draw on multiple intelligences, these teaching strategies encourage learners to build on existing strengths and knowledge to learn new content and skill. Likewise, adult ESL learners from cultures where other intelligences such as interpersonal or musical are highly valued may find the MI classroom a productive learning environment.

Providing eight different ways of teaching is one of the most remarkable features of MI theory. MI aids teachers in creating more personalized and diversified instructional experience. Teachers can present their lessons in a wide variety of ways using music, cooperative learning, art activities, role play, multimedia, field trips, inner reflection, and so on (Armstrong, 2000). In order to vary instructional approaches, teachers who use MI in their classrooms should plan activities in order to incorporate each of the eight intelligences.

Christision (1998) lists four steps to show how MI theory applies to ELT. The first step is to identify the activities frequently used in our classes and categorize them to each particular type of intelligence. For this purpose, he developed a list as a frame of reference. Step two is to make plans by selecting appropriate classroom activities/tasks, taking the following factors into consideration: students' needs, strengths, levels, learning styles, the teachers' personal teaching rationales, his/her multiple intelligence profile, and teaching style, etc. step three is to use ELT Multiple Intelligences weekly, monthly checklist to keep track of different activities/tasks conducted in the class.

The theory of multiple intelligences was developed in 1993 by Dr. Howard Gardner, professor of education at Harvard University. According to Teele (2004) "there are at least seven intelligences that everyone seems to possess to a greater or lesser degree" (p.20). Then Gardner added an eighth intelligence to the list. He proposes eight different intelligences to account for a boarder range of human potential in children and adults. These intelligences are:

Theories of intelligence clearly indicate that there are distinct linguistic abilities that differ across individuals. But what kind of relationship, if any, does exist between intelligence and language learning strategy use in general and learning grammar in particular has so far been a controversial issue in the field of applied linguistics.

Consistent with the current literature on intelligence it is believed that our students have a broad range of capacities, only some of which are valued and consciously developed through language learning. Therefore, one can hypothesize that conscious development of a broader range of capacities would better prepare the students for the complexities of language learning. Students who are alienated by the narrow

range of capacities currently valued and developed will be drawn in by opportunities to learn and work in a variety of ways.

Today there are two major schools of thought on the nature of intelligence. The first, supported by such psychologists as Eysenck (1982) and Jensen (1997) believe that all intelligence comes from one general factor, known as g. The proponents of the other school of thought include Gardner (1993) and Sternberg (2000) think that there is more than one general type of intelligence, or in other word, that there are different types of intelligences.

An underlying assumption behind the practical application of MI theory is the realization that individuals are different. Then teachers cannot teach them as if they are all the same. Gardner (1993) believes that "We are not all the same; we do not have the same kinds of mind, and education works most effectively for most individuals if…human differences are taken seriously" (p.208).

Therefore, the main purpose of the present study is to compare the effect of task-based instruction to the intermediate learners with different types of intelligence on their syntactic achievement.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Design

In this study, a mixed-methods design has been used. According to Dorney (2005), mixed-methods research involves different combinations of qualitative and quantitative research either at the data collection or at the analysis levels. A mixed-methods design is characterized by the combination of at least one qualitative and quantitative research component.

3.2. Participants

One hundred students enrolled in General Writing classes in Jihad Daneshgahi, took part in this study but based on their scores on an English Proficiency Test (A KET test (Key English Test) taken from Cambridge handbook, 2004) only 48 male and female subjects (i.e., candidates whose scores fell within one standard deviation above and below the mean) participated in the main study. The subjects were selected from intermediate level and their age ranged varied from 20-40.

3.3. Instruments and Materials

The following tests and questionnaire were used in the study: the Multiple Intelligence Developmental Assessment Scale (MIDAS) for adults (20 years of age and over) to assess the multiple intelligences of learners, the translated version of MIDAS, a test of grammar to make sure that the subjects' level of grammatical knowledge was as homogenous as possible both in terms of their grammar prior to the treatment and their pre-knowledge on the content of instruction, and a post-test measuring and comparing the syntactic achievement of the two groups as well as a KET test (Key English Test) as a means of estimating the participants level of proficiency and homogenizing the students' general English. Also, a series of tasks was used as the treatment in the experimental group.

Proficiency test (KET)

The proficiency test included 100 items which took the subjects 105 minutes to answer. As it was specified by the test book, the Reading and Writing section of the test together took 1 hour and 10 minutes with a total of 56 questions, with 25 minutes for the listening section. The speaking section had two parts and lasts 8 to 10 minutes, involving two examiners and a pair of candidates. One examiner served as an interlocutor while the other who took no part in the interaction as an assessor. The speaking component contributed 25% of the marks for the whole test. Participants had a question paper and a separate answer sheet on which they recorded their answers. Efforts were made to keep the language of instructions to candidates as simple as possible, and an example was given in every part of the test.

Development and pilot of the pretest

A teacher-made grammar test based on the content of the instruction with 30 multiple choice items and 10 production items that was piloted first to make sure about its reliability and item facility, was used prior to the treatment to evaluate the participants' ability to produce grammatical sentences, and hence homogenize them in this respect. So a pilot study took place on the prepared test. It was given to a pilot group with 30 students who were similar to the students under the study. Each item carried 1 score and was rated by the researcher. The time allocated for this test was 20 minutes and the students required to answer all the questions on the answer sheet accompanying the test.

The descriptive statistics of the pilot test proved that certain items needed modifications. An item analysis procedure carried on, then the poor item were discarded, so the number of items reduced from 43 to 40 items. Upon implementing the required modifications, a multiple-choice test of grammar including 40 items was prepared and administered to both experimental and control groups. To estimate the reliability of the test, the K-R21 formula was applied. The reliability figure achieved (0.77) was high enough for the test to be used in the study.

The post-test

To find out the students' level of grammar knowledge after teaching grammar another grammar test based on what they have learned during the research program was developed. This test that was piloted to ensure about its reliability and item facility is like the pretest with the same items. The test was equally used in both groups after the instruction period to examine the effect of the treatment and compare it with a routine practice in grammar courses.

For both tests (pretest and posttest) the subjects were required to mark their answers on the answer sheet accompanying the test. The subjects were informed that no negative points were conceived for their wrong responses. They were also asked to answer all the questions. The time allocated for the tests was 20 minutes. The K-R21 indices for the pretest and posttest of syntactic knowledge were found to be 0.77 for pretest and 0.82 for posttest.

Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scales (MIDAS)

The MIDAS used in this study included 119 items administered to the subjects to demonstrate their cognitive involvements and intellectual judgments. The MI questionnaire was adapted from the theses of Zarrati (2004). As Zarrati (2004) has stated, the English version of MI questionnaire was translated by her to guarantee the full comprehension of the questions by the subjects. As Zarrati (2004) claims, the Persian version of the questionnaire was scrutinized by some experts at Azad University, and they made necessary modifications. The corrected version went through a pilot study and was administered to about 20 students from Kish Institute. As she states, after getting the feedback from these students, the reliability of the questionnaire was found to be 0.86. And, the reliability of this questionnaire was acceptable.

Although there was no time limitation for the completion of the instrument, the average administration time is about 35-45 minutes to complete the 119 multiple-choice questions that cover eight areas of abilities interests, skills and activities. Musical: skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns, Spatial: the potential to recognize and manipulate a wide space or more confined areas, Kinesthetic: the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems, Linguistic: sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and to use language to accomplish certain goals, Logical-mathematical: a series of skills and abilities in calculations as well as logical reasoning and problem solving, Interpersonal: the capacity to understand oneself, to have an effective working model of oneself and use that information in regulating one's life, Interpersonal: person's capacity to understand the intention, motivations and desires of other people consecutively, to

work effectively with others, and Naturalist: the ability to classify and categorize many different types of plants and vegetation in one's environment.

When answering the 119 questions, the respondent selects from six descriptive statements rather than merely selecting a yes/no. Each set of responses are uniquely written to match the content of the question. It is so important that the responses are realistic. As the MIDAS is not a test, there are no time limits and as all humans differ so markedly, Users are not compelled to answer or guess at every question, as each item has an "I don't know" or "Does not apply" choice. This design encourages the respondent to think carefully about responding to the content of the question rather than thoughtlessly responding yes/no or haphazardly selecting a choice. Each item uses a five-point Likert scale which permits a range of responses, i.e., "All the Time" or "Excellent" (a) to "Never or Very little" (e). There is also an "I don't know or Does not apply" choice (F) for every question, thus the respondent is not forced to answer inappropriately when the question is beyond his/her level of knowledge (Shearer, 1995). The last option of every question provides no force foe the respondent to guess or answer beyond his or her actual level of knowledge. Respondents are not forced to provide generalized responses or answer beyond their level of actual knowledge because a zero category is included for every item when the respondent does not know or the item does not apply. The responses are not calculated for the scale scores. Percentage scores for each scale are calculated from the total number of responses (Shearer, 1995).

Numerous studies of its reliability and validity (Shearer, 1995; Way and Shearer, 1990) have examined the internal consistency of the items within each scale and have indicated that the MIDAS scales can provide a reasonable estimate of one's MI strengths and limitations that correspond with external rating and criteria. The reliability indices for the eight components of the MI and the total MI used in our study were found to range from the highest of .93 for the total MI to the lowest of .54 for Musical Intelligence. The reliability indexes proved that reliable questionnaires were used in this study.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

First, the proficiency test KET, VERSION 2004, was administered to one hundred students from Jihad Daneshgahi in order to determine the level of proficiency of the learners and make a group as homogeneous as possible. The type of sampling employed in this study was the available sampling. All the participants, chosen from among 100 students, were homogenized by the KET.

It is also noteworthy that, according to the instruction of KET, the writing and speaking modules were measured holistically by two raters; to rate the writing and speaking sections the researcher needed to train another rater who was with an MA degree in language teaching. It should be mentioned that the raters were two well-experienced teachers in Jihad Daneshgahi. Both raters, did couple of sample ratings together to ensure the same understanding of the writing and speaking rating scale of KET. After that, the two raters rated the participants' oral and written performance according to the KET rating scale.

Through considering the normal distribution of the subjects' scores on the proficiency test, those scores which were one standard deviation above and below the mean were decided to be in the group of subjects. Those learners who scored above 90% were excluded from the study as they were deemed to have mastered the target form. Those learners scoring below 45% did not participate in this study as it was assumed that they were not ready to learn the form, therefore all learners who participated in the study were considered developmentally ready to learn the target form. The researcher could not have all the 48 subjects in one class.

Therefore, the subjects were randomly put into 2 different classes. There were a total of 48 learners out of 100 (27 as experimental group and 21 as control group) who scored between 90% and 45%. Then a 40-item test of grammar was administered to both groups as a pretest to make sure that the two groups were homogeneous with respect to their knowledge of grammar.

So after the pretest, a series of tasks including individual and group work type were assigned as a part of

the treatment in experimental group. These tasks were taken from different books such as Top Notch (2006) and American English File (2008). Following the process of the selecting the control and experimental groups, the researcher commenced the actual treatment program. The tasks were performed in 20 sessions in the experimental group. The time allocated to each session was 90 minutes. Because of the purpose of this study, in each session, 45 minutes was allocated to teaching grammar. The other 45 minutes was used to teach writing. The only difference between the two groups lied in the application of the treatment in the experimental group. It is worth noting that in order to control the teacher variable; both groups were taught by the researcher herself.

The lessons taught in both groups were under these headings: tenses, modals, passive and conditional sentences. While in the control group, these lessons were taught in a usual traditional fashion and only the exercises in the books were employed. The students were not required to do any kind of tasks with the grammar they were learning. In the experimental group, however, the teacher/researcher worked within a task based framework. The content was taught through a content based approach and the treatment was integrated with tasks. In the experimental group for each of these lessons a task or several tasks were used and grammar was taught through them. Each task had four main phases: warm-up (pre-task), main task, follow-up (post-task), and homework.

The whole treatment lasted for 20 sessions with the administration of the post-test to both groups ending the treatment. The means of the scores achieved by both groups in the post-test were compared through running a t-test.

The next step was to determine the intelligence types among the subjects. In order to find out the dominant intelligence of each group MIDAS (adults) were administered. The questionnaire had 119 items with six possible answers which had the scores from 0 to 5. Since the subjects in this research were at the intermediate level of language proficiency, it was necessary for the researcher to translate MIDAS into Persian so that they could be easily comprehensible to the participants. The students were given the translated form of MIDAS is Farsi which was adopted from the MA thesis by Zarrati (2004). Next, the MIDAS tests were administered, and the eight different scores for the eight intelligences were obtained.

It should be noted that the MIDAS was administered after deleting the name of intelligences—musical, kinesthetic, mathematical, spatial, linguistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist intelligence—in MIDAS translations in order not to confuse the students. After collecting all the questionnaires and tests, the researcher categorized and analyzed the data.

4. RESULTS

A second grammar test with 40 items designed by researcher to be used as posttest after the treatment was completely carried out. Because the posttest was a teacher-made test a pilot study took place on the test. The grammar test was given to the pilot group with 30 students who were similar to the students under the study.

An independent t-test is run to compare the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the posttest of Syntactic knowledge in order to probe the effect of task-based instruction on the improvement of the syntactic knowledge of the Iranian EFL learners. As displayed in Table 1 the mean scores for the experimental and control groups on the posttest of Syntactic Knowledge are 28.44 and 23.19.

Table 1:

Descriptive Statistics for the Posttest of Syntactic Knowledge

GROUP	*N*	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*Std. Error Mean*
EXPERIMENTAL	27	28.4444	6.17273	1.18794

CONTROL	21	23.1905	4.95600	1.08149

The results of the independent t-test indicated that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the posttest of syntactic Knowledge (t (46) = 3.18, P = .003 > .05: R = .42).

Construct validity of MI components

A factor analysis through the varimax rotation method was run to probe the underlying constructs of the MI profile. As displayed in Table 2, the SPSS extracted one factor which accounts for 49.84 percent of the total variance.

Table 2:

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.988	49.845	49.845	3.988	49.845	49.845
2	.980	12.250	62.095			
3	.962	12.022	74.117			
4	.670	8.374	82.491			
5	.516	6.451	88.942			
6	.373	4.668	93.610			
7	.309	3.857	97.467			
8	.203	2.533	100.000			

Table 3 displays the factor loadings of the components of the MI profile. Since all of the MI components load on single factor, it can be concluded that they are measuring the same underlying construct.

Table 3:

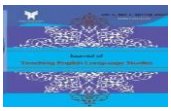
Factor Loadings

	Component
	1
LINGUISTICMI	.856
INTERPERSONALMI	.782
INTRAPERSONALMI	.778
KINESTHETICMI	.769
SPATIALMI	.745
MATHLOGICALMI	.690
NATURALISTMI	.547
MUSICALMI	.341

Research question 1

The first research question raised in the study was: Do task-based instruction and traditional instruction differentially affect Iranian EFL learners' learning of syntax? An independent t-test is run to compare the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the posttest of Syntactic knowledge in order to probe the effect of task-based instruction on the improvement of the syntactic knowledge of the Iranian EFL learners. The mean scores for the experimental and control groups on the posttest of Syntactic Knowledge were found to be 28.44 and 23.19.

The results of the independent t-test indicates that there is a significant difference between the mean



scores of the experimental and control groups on the posttest of syntactic Knowledge (t (46) = 3.18, P = .003 > .05: R = .42). Based on these results it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between task-based instruction and traditional instruction of syntactic achievement among Iranian EFL learners. The experimental group after receiving task-based instructions outperformed the control group on the posttest of syntactic knowledge.

Research question 2

The second research question raised in the study was: Do Iranian EFL learners with different intelligence types differentially learn syntax? A one-way ANOVA is run to investigate the effect of the different types of multiple intelligences on the EFL learner students' syntactic achievement. The F-observed value for the mean scores of the students with different types of intelligence on the posttest of syntactic knowledge is not significant (F (5, 40) = .52, P = .753 > .05, ω^2 = .03). Based on these results it can be concluded that there is not any significant difference between English learners' syntactic achievement with different types of multiple intelligences.

Table 4:

One-Way ANOVA Posttest of Syntactic Achievement by MI Type

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	103.044	5	20.609	.529	.753
Within Groups	1558.195	40	38.955		
Total	1661.239	45			

A secondary objective of the study was to determine if there was any relationship between learners' intelligence type and their sex and age. This will not be addressed here but based on these results it can be concluded that there was not any significant relationship between intelligence types and learners' gender. Also, Pearson correlation coefficients showed that age is negatively correlated with all types of MI.

5. DISCUSSION

The results showed that tasks had a positive effect on subjects' syntactic achievement. Therefore, the conclusion is that the application of various syntactic tasks helped the participants in the experimental group to perform better than the control group. Hence, according to sheen (1994), task work is certainly a useful pedagogical tool in all teaching contexts. Moreover, analysis of real classroom tasks in training workshops can open up opportunities for the integrated development of understanding, and for techniques that can help teachers make their classroom practice more communicative and meaning-focused, and with greater potential for language learning. The "task" can thus function as a unit for learning, for teaching, and for training (Cameron, 1997, p.345). The results of this study are compatible with the most current approaches to TBT which recognize the importance of grammar. Specifically, the results corroborate Hatch (1978) who argues that learning how to interact entails the process of learning grammar and support Ellis's (2003) argument that lack of attention to form leads to learners' and fossilization.

6. CONCLUSION

Consistent with the current literature on MI theory and findings of the present study, the researcher believes that all the students have broad ranges of capacities and considering their strengths and their

intelligence level teachers should begin an increased appreciation of their students and new insights into how to reach and teach them. The finding of this study would be applicable to both teachers and students. The findings of this study may help the teachers to take a closer look at grammar treatment and to be more sensitive to the choice of grammar and teaching them to the students. Moreover, the findings of this study may develop teacher's understanding for selection of effective grammatical techniques. Observing the extent of the learners' intelligence profile and the salience of MI theory on teaching and learning second language teachers can exploit that relative useful information in the right place per individual's strengths and weaknesses.

The theory also assists the teachers to expand their teaching repertoire to include a broader range of methods, materials, and techniques to reach wide and diverse range of learners. If the teacher is aware of the intelligence profile of the class, strategies can be developed to use students' intelligence strengths to acquire knowledge more effectively.

It appears that the consideration of multiple intelligences and task-based method leads teachers to offer a greater variety of learning activities, and revision of their methods and techniques of teaching grammar. Teachers can consider intelligence, the scope, sequence and methods of training activities to meet the needs of particular students.

Regarding the effect of task-based activities, it can be pointed out that these activities are interesting and more authentic to learners. Teachers can make use of different tasks as teaching devices in their classroom. Using tasks would be beneficial in teaching grammar because they create new situations for the students and learning would be more interesting. They can increase the amount of understanding and reduce the amount the difficulties present in some area of language learning. When students are engaged in performing different tasks, learning would be easier (Nunan, 1989; Parrott, 1993). These tasks would help students to use their syntactic knowledge to solve the problems and do the tasks.

Ways of learning are as different as the colors of the rainbow. All people have different personalities, preferences and tastes. Teachers need to be aware of and value these differences. Through observation, teachers can learn what kind of learners their students are. Once they know what kind of learner their student is, they can then develop activities that make the most of their students' abilities.

To address the issue of different learner backgrounds, needs, and learning styles, Bachman (1990) suggested that teachers incorporate a variety of methods of language assessment. Understanding student learning style preferences is an important step in this direction. The closer language testing mirrors preferred learning styles, the more one can hope for accurate assessment of language proficiency.

What is clearly recommended hereby is straight forward: As teachers or those directly responsible for preparing reading materials especially for high school students, we should give the paramount importance to the grammatical tasks to the students, and make them aware of different strategies which help them to improve their syntactic achievement.

An MI perspective can serve to alter education plans in a number of meaningful ways. Gardner (1993) describes three positive ways in which MI theory can be applied to improve school design: 1) the cultivation of desired end states; 2) approaching a concept, subject matter, or discipline in a variety of ways; 3) the personalization of education (as cited in Shearer, 1995)

With regard to the above definition and the findings of this study, syllabus designers and material developers should be led to a consideration for preparation of properly grammatical tasks as a method to increase the efficiency of classes. By use of grammatical tasks, the teacher focuses students' attention on meaning rather than form, students do something via the language; they read a text and do something with the information. Textbook writers can include different tasks of grammar in their books. Besides, different tasks included in the textbooks can be practiced in the classrooms.

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