



## **MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE THEORY FOR EFL DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS OF NON-FEE PAYMENT SCHOOL**

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### **ABSTRACT**

After more than thirty five years, multiple intelligence theory of Howard Gardner is still used to help teaching and learning process in the classroom. Teachers can guide students to maximize their English language learning by optimizing their potential intelligences. Though so, discussion on multiple intelligence toward disadvantaged students is not adequate enough. This paper will figure out the usefulness of the Multiple intelligence theory to facilitate the disadvantaged students in learning English language in the classroom especially who learn at non - fee paying school. Hopefully that this paper benefits for teachers who teach disadvantaged students, those who are working to improve the quality of education for disadvantaged students, and give a useful light to student teacher's knowledge about the unique circumstances of disadvantaged students.

Keywords: multiple intelligence, EFL disadvantaged students, learning language, non-fee paying school.

### **1. Introduction**

The author of Frames of mind (1983), Howard Gardner, never thought that his writing about multiple intelligence has given a new great spectrum for teachers in the way seeing the students. Until this day, multiple intelligence theory is variously applied to develop ranges of students' ability. Realizing that students have their own unique intelligence, teachers shall adopt various ways in teaching a subject. Teacher may not treat students as the same persons who have the same needs and similar intentions in learning although they commonly have the same age in a regular classroom. Multiple intelligence theory has made teaching

and learning full of benefits, meaningful and resulting creativity. For weak students either cognitive or physical performances, they can learn something useful for their life. There are many special children success when teacher and parent can recognize and then develop what intelligence work best on their children. Teaching music to a child who has high interest in music is more precious than spending too much effort in teaching them who doesn't like music.

This fabulous theory can also give benefit for students who financially have limited access to good quality school. Children of poverty for example. they commonly learn in free school which can be found in rural areas

and sub urban. Mostly, this school has less quality. Helping them to recognize their best intelligence and develop it well will make their learning effective and give positive effect for their future. They can be independence and a productive person during their life. For some reasons, not many formal educational institutions take up this theory in their language learning classroom.

Non fee paying school - a non public school- built by donation of Muslims through zakah is one form of Muslims responsibility to education which based their teaching and learning process through MI. This school is provided for children of poverty only. Unlike other schools, student recruitment in this school is determined by the poverty rank. Non- fee paying schools prioritize the poor, orphans and those who are qualify to get zakah. When schools receive zakah from certain charity foundation, teachers and educators shall have responsibility to conduct well teaching and learning process. Adopting the most efficient teaching and learning strategy for language instruction for disadvantaged students will improve their quality of education - cognitive and affective performance- and would give positive contribution for their future. For this purpose, adopting the concept of multiple intelligence theory would be the most efficient language instructions. As stated by Goebel (2009, p.2) that “differentiating instruction using Howard Gardener’s Multiple intelligence theory transcends the rules that govern generational poverty and provide students with the tools necessary to succeed in the classroom”. Unfortunately, there are limited discussions on this issue. This paper discusses multiple intelligence toward

disadvantaged students of non- fee paying school.

## **2. Review of Literature**

### *2.1. Family financial problems affect students’ cognitive performance and affective performance*

Disadvantaged students are special in many ways. They have different cognitive and affective performances in learning a foreign language as compared with non-disadvantaged students. These performances are in turn influenced by several factors. the first of which is that low economic family often dismisses their dream to go to good quality school. They are often rejected because of low academic achievement and their disability to pay amount of money to support the school. School selects their students by test of academic achievement. The highest ranks will be selected as the students of the school. In reality, OECD (2012) mentioned that disadvantaged socio-economic students tend to be low performers in school. Most of the low economic students do not pass the test because they have low academic achievement in many subject matters (Letts C, Edward, S, et.al; 2013) - English is one of. Only one or two disadvantaged students are awarded for the scholarship. One reason for this bad condition is that most of them lack of time to studying. Whilst the high academic achievement students have sufficient time to study in and out of school, the lower achievement students have to work to support their life and their family life. Also, very often, they must sacrifice their school day to earn money like kids sell newspapers on the street.

Second, the poverty is like circle of horrible generative disease. If someone is born in a poverty parents,

commonly she/ he will also grow a poverty family which means less educated children will be born again and again. Letts C, Edward, S, et al, (2013) found that younger children whose mothers had minimum years of education performed less well in language production which will inhibits their children in future learning. The children cannot discuss their learning problems in school with their parents at home because most parents of disadvantaged children are not well educated. Additionally, Kormos, J and Kiddle, T (2013) mentioned that parental economic background influences students' quality achievement at school. Low economic social class's family, a case in Chile and rural areas of Indonesia, do not consider to master English as their needs due to they have limited access to modern technological development and information technology which commonly use English as the medium of communication such as in social networking and computer games. The third factor that influences their cognitive performance is that instead of providing nutritious food that can support their cognitive development, their parents are forced to provide less nutritious food in order to make ends meet. Understandable, good quality school takes price. Schools need money to run their academic process well. The better the school, the more money it takes. Low economic families do not cope with this situation. Instead of paying more for their education, they prefer to prioritize their living needs such as food and shelters. So, very often, disadvantaged students have choice; have not to go to school. Finally, insufficient resources for learning language impact the disadvantaged students. Whilst non – disadvantaged students learn with

modern media such as digital dictionaries, internet browsing and social media through their own gadgets; disadvantaged students depend only on a paper-copy dictionary that they can borrow from the school library because the school does not provide free internet as learning resources. This affects their attitude toward English. It makes them think that learning English is very difficult when they don't have sufficient resources. This perception influences their motivation to learn English. Low motivation hinders the students to achieve good academic language performance at school. All the aforementioned factors influence their affective performance.

## *2.2. Disadvantaged students commonly have instrumental motivation.*

Wimolmas (2012) described that students tend to have instrumental motivation in learning language as foreign language rather than integrative motivation. A student is categorized having instrumental motivation if she/he learn English due to increasing their score and pass the school English test. Disadvantaged students found learning foreign language (English) as a compulsory subject that has to be learnt at school and they cannot avoid learning it. Their aim is to pass the examination at the end of semester. But, the aims to pass the test in learning English that disadvantaged students have is not the only causes of instrumental motivation which affects them. Financial problem is also one of causes having instrumental motivation. They cannot use modern technology or better dictionary as a media to learn English since they cannot afford to buy it. It limits their access to learn English well. Moreover, the parents will not allow

them to spend a cash to support them to learn language in private course.

Another cause is parents' perception that another learning foreign language is useless and will not give them financial benefits at this time being triggers negative effect on students' learning. This opinion influences their behavior toward the language (Kormos, J and Kiddle, T ; 2013). It makes their awareness to learn English is decreased and lowering their motivation to learn. The only chance to learn English is in the classroom. Furthermore, they will not be able to discuss English assignments at home because most of parents of disadvantaged students have lower educational background of English. As the result, the students are reluctant to learn more (Gayton, A, 2010). This condition is lowering their motivation to learn foreign language.

### *2.3. How is the classroom of disadvantaged students commonly?*

Disadvantaged students have lack of time studying, limited access to better learning resources; some have no support in learning foreign language. It seems that learning is hardest thing to do by them. As hard as it is, teacher finds it as well in teaching. Teacher will find that there will be many students in his/her classroom who do not complete their assignment in time. There will be many students absence during the teaching and learning process. Teacher probably will meet students who reluctant joining language classroom process and do something annoying. The process of teaching and learning becomes stress and not conducive. To sum up, disadvantaged students need a special attention from not only teacher but all educators and society to help them to have better school life and

future. Teacher should be able to manage these students. Facilitating them with interesting teaching and learning instructions will attract their attention. Teachers play great roles to increase these students' motivation in learning language (English).

### *2.4. How can multiple intelligence help disadvantaged students learning language?*

Dr. Payne, the author of *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (As stated in Goebel, 2009), mentioned that disadvantaged students have financial, emotional, mental and physical needs. This issue shall be taken seriously in educational system to improve the quality of instruction for disadvantaged students. Multiple intelligence theory is already well-known by educators all around the world. The theory proposed by Howard Gardner in 1983 broke the traditional view toward intelligence and give a great impact on education especially in teaching and learning process. Gardner mentioned that there is no general intelligence but everyone has at least eight different intelligences. This views has given a new way of looking at how student's ability in learning.

Gardner (1983) claimed that all individuals possess the full range of intelligences—the intelligences are what define human beings; 2) No two individuals, not even identical twins, exhibit precisely the same profile of intellectual strengths and weaknesses. These intelligences can be developed during his or her life. This concept of multiple intelligence theory gives good solution in teaching and learning process in the classroom in which the students are heterogeneous and varies of their academic performance. The disadvantages students, who are

commonly abided by their less averaged performance because of traditional view on intelligence, now have new light of learning and reach for their success in life. Howard Gardner's multiple intelligence are essential to the growth and development of students living in poverty (Goebel, 2009). Students must not worry, sad and afraid that they will fail if they are not good enough on math because he is still able to be best on art, music or other intelligences through appropriate quality instruction of multiple intelligence.

Arnold & Fonseca (as cited in Spirovska, 2013) mentioned that "with MIT applied in the language classroom, teachers are better able to tap into the areas of personal meaningfulness of their students since they are recognizing the differences inherent in the students and putting individuals with their different ways of learning where they belong, back at the centre of the learning process." Christison (1996) argued that there are three points of consideration in manifesting the theory of multiple intelligence to help learner find their own way of learning. First, use interesting activity in introducing the theory such as "find someone who ...." and "multiple intelligence pizza". This activity is proposed by Armstrong in 1990. Ask the learners to recognize their own intelligence through list of Inventory for EFL learner and guides them to share and compare it with their friends and teacher. In addition, At last, teacher and learner can work together to do teaching and learning process based on the intelligences the class possesses.

#### *2.5. Applying the Multiple intelligence in foreign language classroom.*

There are 7 multiple intelligence that Gardner mentioned in 1983. They are: (1) linguistics intelligences. (2) logical-mathematical intelligence, (3) spatial intelligence, (4) musical intelligence,

(5) Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, (6) naturalistic intelligence (7) interpersonal intelligence, (8) intra personal intelligence. These intelligences can be developed to promote students language learning in the classroom. Although Gardner has never explicitly told how to implement the MI procedurally in the classroom, many educators have done implementing the MI theory in their classroom because it is combined-able and interdependent-able one to another. Christison (1996) explains that the intelligences are dynamic; teacher can develop all the various intelligence in teaching and learning process. One intelligence may be developed higher than the others through appropriate combination of strategies of teaching and control the environmental influences. Intelligence cannot function well by itself. People can understand what a person with mathematical – logical intelligence presents if he also has linguistic – verbal intelligence. EFL learners benefit from a classroom environment that draws on different intelligence (Christison, 1996, p. 31). Arnold, J & Fonseca, C (2004) described that activities of learning language in the classroom can be designed to accommodate different types of intelligences. For example, in conducting a drama, students need to consider what other feelings (interpersonal intelligence) and express their feeling appropriately through good language (linguistic). It can be concluded that each of intelligence supports the other intelligences in learning in order to be a successful person. As addition, Richard & Roger (cited in Arnold, J & Fonseca, C, 2004) mentioned that learning language doesn't mean to learn the linguistics it has but covers all aspects of communication.

Along with the explanation above, Gardner (2011) concluded that there are two major educational implications of his theory. They are individuation and pluralization. Individuation means that in teaching and learning a foreign language, teacher need to facilitate students with varieties of activities ensuring that each student learn a topic based on his/her uniqueness of learning. Younas, et.al (2015) had a research on five multiple intelligence as described below. They mentioned that these five intelligences are helpful and beneficial in learning language.

#### *2.5.1 Linguistics intelligences.*

It is dealing with the ability to produce and reproduce information in the form of spoken or written language. Linguistic is an ability to analyze information and create products involving oral and written language such as speeches, books, and memos. All students have linguistic intelligence although they are different to some extent. Students with this intelligence commonly have higher performance in learning language (cited by Giles, Pitre and Womak in Younas, et al, 2015) . They are able to give speech, deliver oral task or write their opinions because they have good ability in using vocabulary, good knowledge in grammar and have good performance in delivering oral presentation. Teacher can take benefits of this. This student can help teacher and his or her classmates. She or he can be assisted during teaching and learning process. Her his linguistics intelligence will be developed well through some appropriate activities such as visiting library, reading book and newspaper, reading and telling jokes, writing diary, playing word games, memorizing song, poem or story and discussing and

debating. Shearer, B stated that this children are doing better in Journalism, education, Sociology and Literature. (Younas,et al, 2015) mentioned strong linguistic intelligence students commonly has profession as language teacher, reporters, editor, librarian, and announcers.

#### *2.5.2 Musical intelligence.*

Musical intelligence is an ability to produce, remember, and make meaning of different patterns of sound (Gardner, 1999). Students who have this kind of intelligence learn well through music. They like listening to music. Listening to song is their favorite way to learn language. Maftoon and Sarem (2012) in Younas, et.al (2015) state that this student is interested in accent, pitch, and rhyme in language learning. Learning through music makes them more relax, comfortable, creative and productive as well as a good way to motivating. This intelligence can be well developed through some activities such as listening to favorite song and record it, sing and play English songs, going to concert, deliver poem, and turn the learning material into song or poem (cited by Chen in Younas,et al, 2015).

#### *2.5.3 Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence.*

Bodily-Kinesthetic is an ability to use one's own body to create products or solve problems. Shu-Fen-Chen (2005) defined kinesthetic intelligence is the ability to use the body in a good way to share his or her thinking to communicate or to present something. The appropriate use of Total Physical Response Approach in teaching and learning will develop and motivate the students in learning language. they are well motivated learning through

miming, acting and drama. They have better motivation in doing sport, so provide a chance to move their body through dancing or sport outside the classroom before teaching and learning begun can stimulate their motivation to learn.

#### 2.5.4 *Interpersonal Intelligence.*

Interpersonal is an ability to recognize and understand other people's moods, desires, motivations, and intentions (Gardner, 1999). This is an ability to understand people. Students who have strong intelligences of interpersonal learn better with their classmates. a group work or team work will be better for them. They can learn faster if they can share their ideas with their friends in a discussion before they speak. Shu-Fen-Chen (2005) suggests some activities to develop a good Interpersonal intelligence in learning English language such as Joining some club, Having parties, Visiting busy places, Interact with one person in English daily, Observing others keenly, and Understanding people.

#### 2.5.5 *Intrapersonal intelligence.*

Intrapersonal is an ability to recognize and understand his or her own moods, desires, motivations, and intentions (Gardner, 1999). Students with this ability are very confident to themselves. they prefer to work and study alone because they understand what they want in learning. They are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. A reflective activity, such as writing journal can develop their Intrapersonal intelligence. In the future, they can be writers, therapists and religious figures (Shu-Fen-Chen, 2005). Chen also suggests these activities to develop Intrapersonal intelligence, such

as Thinking about goals for future, attending religious ceremonies, Keeping a record of thoughts in dairy, Listing strengths and weaknesses in language learning, Sitting in a comfortable place for 20 minutes, Engaging in activities that make more confident.

Previously, Christison, (1996) believes that spatial intelligence and logical – mathematical be manifested in EFL classroom. Spatial intelligence is ability to graphically represent visual or spatial ideas. Students with this ability learn well through charts, maps, diagrams, paintings, and visualization activities. Logical – mathematical intelligence is ability to use numbers and reasons effectively. It can be developed well through scientific demonstration, logic puzzles and games, problem solving and logic – sequential presentation on something. So, all the intelligences are beneficial for students to learn. Educational Broadcasting Corporation (2004) mentioned that there are some benefits of using multiple intelligence in the classroom:

- a. Those who perform poorly on traditional tests are turned on to learning when classroom experiences incorporate artistic, athletic, and musical activities.
- b. It is an authentic learning based on your students' needs, interests and talents.
- c. It increases parent and community involvement.
- d. It increases students' self-esteem because they act as 'the specialist' of a material learned. It accumulates positive educational experiences and the capability for creating solutions to problems in life.

### **3. Some considerations in using Multiple Intelligence Theory in classroom of EFL disadvantaged students.**

#### *3.1 Turn on students' positive perception to encourage their motivation.*

Change students' perception that English is hard to learn should be the first thing to do in teaching. Disadvantaged Indonesian students commonly have opinion that learning English is confusing. One of the reasons is because English language system is different from Indonesian language system. Indonesian language has completely the same in the way how the letter is spoken as the way the letter is written and spelt. But English language is not. The way the letter is spelt is not completely the same as the way when the letter is spoken through utterances of words. The spoken words very often are different from how the words are written. So, instead of telling the students about the differences which can lead to confusedness, telling the sameness of literacy will be a good starting point to show that learning English is easy (Hadi, 2006). Changing the students' perception into positive point of view about what is learnt gives positive effects toward the process of learning. Another important point is that teacher should find an appropriate strategy in teaching this language system comprehensively.

#### *3.2 Boast them with positive cultural point of view of the target language.*

Most of disadvantaged students do not have positive knowledge about English culture. It can be understood because English culture adopts western

culture which is quite different from Indonesian, eastern culture. By providing them a video about English culture's life and compare it to their Indonesian life will give them a new look at a new world. Telling them an interesting part of English of their age will stimulate their curiosity of the language which leads them to learn. But, to be remembered, in telling them or showing them about English culture, a teacher should be very carefully selective on the materials due to the cultural differentiation. There are few things of English cultures that are not accepted by Indonesian and must not be display to the school age of disadvantaged students.

#### *3.3 Helping students to develop all the intelligences they possess through effective instructions based on multiple intelligence.*

There are many teaching and learning strategies resources teacher can adopt or create their own that works on the students in his classroom. It is better to teachers and all educators to work together and share their opinions and experiences in order to accommodate students' intelligences. Although, they are very good at one specific intelligence, students need to establish other intelligence because intelligences work best when they are supporting each other.

#### *3.4 Encourage the students to be active in the classroom.*

Commonly disadvantaged students are not active language learners in the classroom because they have lower expectation toward the foreign language learning. Effective classroom learning strategies can change their expectation. Group work or



collaborative learning can be effective instruction to make their low performance dismiss (Hoy, A.W and Margetts, Kay, 2007). Base on this concept, teacher can create and facilitate new language teaching learning strategies which appropriate to the disadvantages students in order to develop their lifelong learning.

### *3.5 Choose appropriate assessment for students.*

Ensure that the disadvantaged students are assessed well. Right ways of assessing their achievement help them to find their strength and weakness and accommodate it for their future. Kym Goebel (2009) mentioned that Outcome based assessment can be applied based on Gardner multiple intelligence. It applies natural abilities of students to produce result. Goebel states that outcome based assessment is an effective method of teaching disadvantaged students. The use of diagnostic language assessment, formative and summative assessment should be developed well to monitors the students' progress in learning language.

### *3.6 Link the disadvantaged parents with school.*

Disadvantaged parents tend to be less involved in their children's school life, for multiple economic and social reasons (Kym Goebel, 2009). Connecting parents, communities and stake holders of education can strengthen school and students. Parents' participation in students' learning give positive effect to the students' motivation in learning. Although most of disadvantaged students don't have well enough knowledge to help their children learning at home, they can

support them by providing sufficient time to study.

### *3.7 Use inexpensive and easy to find media of learning*

Mostly, schools that accommodate learning to disadvantaged students are not well- modern facilitated. They have limited financial supports. So, educators must be creative to use natural facilities in teaching and learning process. Providing cheap and easy to find media for teaching and learning is highly recommended.

### *3.8 Propose financial support.*

Generally, non fee payment schools cannot dispense qualified school needs. The schools are rarely held or join seminar or teacher training due to limited expenses. The teachers commonly have low standard wages for a month. This conditions, doubtlessly, influence teaching and learning quality. So, financial supports by government are extremely needed in order to increase the quality of education.

## **4. Conclusion**

Multiple Intelligence Theory-based in classroom of disadvantaged EFL students is valuable to improve their language learning. Educators can work together to provide the students with appropriate teaching and learning strategies and designing well lesson plan and special curriculum through MIT for optimizing their learning in order to gain better future. Right treatments of evaluation toward disadvantaged students' learning can motivate them to learn, especially English as foreign language, which will benefit for their life. Government must provide good quality education for them

like giving strong financial support, controlling the high quality colleges to give sufficient portion of scholarships for the disadvantaged students learning in these kinds of schools. Finally, recommending candidate of teacher in college to learn about this student will also give precious lesson for their teaching knowledge.

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