

THE REPRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES IN THE “VOICES” TEXTBOOK: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF UNITS 5 -10

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Received: 04/5/2026 Revised: 28/5/2026 Accepted for publication: 29/5/2026.

Abstract

Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory posits that individuals possess distinct profiles of intellectual strengths. Building on this framework, this study investigates the representation of MI types in the activities of the Voices Pre-intermediate (A2/B1) textbook, the prescribed coursebook for English Course 2 at the research institution. Data were collected through a content analysis of 315 activities across Units 5 to 10 and analyzed via descriptive qualitative statistics to determine frequency and distribution. The findings indicated that while the textbook addresses various intelligence types, there is a significant imbalance in their distribution. The most dominant intelligences were Verbal/Linguistic, appearing in 100% of activities, followed by Logical-Mathematical, Intrapersonal, and Interpersonal intelligences. Conversely, Musical and Bodily-Kinesthetic domains were minimally represented, while Naturalistic intelligence was entirely absent. The findings suggest a further application of incorporating diverse, MI-based supplementary materials into classroom instruction and the application of MI theory as a framework for enhancing material development and inclusive learning in higher education.

Keywords: Multiple Intelligences, Content Analysis, Voices Textbook, ELT Materials.

1. Introduction

The field of English Language Teaching (ELT) has witnessed a profound transition from teacher-centered approaches to student-centered pedagogies recently. While the former prioritized content teacher's delivery and instructions, the latter emphasizes addressing the unique needs and learning styles of individual learners. As a result of this shift, the concept of individual differences has emerged as a vital topic, particularly regarding how teaching materials accommodate the diverse intelligences of students.

Various frameworks have been proposed to highlight the prominence of different types of intelligence, most notably the Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory by Howard Gardner. First introduced in 1983, Gardner proposed that human cognitive competence is better described as a set of distinct abilities or mental skills, rather than a single intelligence quotient (IQ). These profiles include Verbal/Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Visual/Spatial, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Naturalistic intelligence. Within this framework, every individual possesses a unique intelligence profile that distinguishes them from others.

The implementation of MI theory in ELT is not limited to classroom techniques but is increasingly scrutinized through the content analysis of teaching materials. According to Snider (2001), incorporating MI theory in textbooks ensures that learners can demonstrate comprehension in several different ways. Consequently, content analysis has become a crucial research instrument for evaluating whether the activities within a textbook cater to the varied needs and potentials of the modern learner.

Previous content analysis studies have revealed significant disparities in how these intelligences are represented in EFL coursebooks. Research on series such as *Touchstone* (Ebadi and Sabzevari,

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2015), *Action Pack* (Maharma, 2021) and *New Headway Plus for Upper-Intermediate-Third Edition* (Salih, 2024) has consistently identified Verbal/Linguistic and Logical-Mathematical as the most dominant intelligence types. Conversely, Naturalistic, Musical, and Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligences are often identified as the least common types, appearing with insignificant frequency. These findings suggest that many EFL textbooks fail to provide a balanced distribution of intelligence types, often requiring teachers to utilize supplementary materials to cover deficiencies.

In the Vietnamese educational context, there is a limited body of research that specifically examines the distribution of MI through a systematic content analysis of teaching materials at tertiary level. Understanding how a textbook like *"Voices"* – a coursebook currently used at many universities in Vietnam is essential for ensuring effective and engaging learning experiences. Therefore, this study aims to examine and analyze the activities in the *"Voices"* (*Pre-intermediate A2/B1*) textbook from Unit 5 to 10 to describe the representation and distribution of the eight multiple intelligence types.

2. Literature review

2.1. The Multiple Intelligences Theory by Howard Gardner

IQ (Intelligence Quotient) has long been used as a standard measure to assess a person's intellectual ability. However, the introduction of MI theory challenges the notion that IQ scores are the only way to measure human ability to reason and solve problems. When Gardner published the book entitled *"Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences"* in 1983, he argued that humans possess several distinct intelligences beyond verbal and logical abilities, which manifest in various skills and abilities. Gardner initially proposed seven profiles, namely Verbal/Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Visual/Spatial, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal and Intrapersonal, and later he added Naturalistic intelligence. He also suggested an Existential intelligence might exist but dismissed the hypothesis of a Spiritual intelligence. Considering MI theory, the IQ test, therefore, only measures Verbal/Linguistic and Logical-Mathematical intelligence (Gardner & Hatch, 1989). To validate his theory, Gardner claims that human cognitive competence is better described in terms of a set of abilities, talents, or mental skills which is referred to as intelligence. All normal individuals possess each of the skills to some extent; however, individuals differ in the degree of skill and their combinations.

Specifically, Gardner (1999) carefully defines the theory by providing explanations of the eight "intelligence" profiles, as mentioned earlier, and the learning skills associated with them.

1. Verbal / Linguistic Intelligence: The ability to use language effectively both orally and in writing.
2. Logical/Mathematical Intelligence: The ability to use numbers effectively and reason well.
3. Visual/Spatial Intelligence: The ability to recognize form, space, color, line, and shape and to graphically represent visual and spatial ideas.
4. Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence: The ability to use the body to express ideas and feelings and to solve problems.
5. Musical Intelligence: The ability to recognize rhythm, pitch, and melody.
6. Interpersonal Intelligence: The ability to understand another person's feelings, motivations, and intentions and to respond effectively.
7. Intrapersonal Intelligence: The ability to know about and understand oneself and recognize one's similarities to and differences from others.
8. Naturalistic Intelligence: The ability to recognize and classify plants, minerals, and animals.

However, Gardner's MI theory has attracted substantial criticism from cognitive psychology and neuroscience. Waterhouse (2006) argued that MI theory lacks validating data and is inconsistent with cognitive neuroscience findings, concluding that it should not serve as a basis for educational practice. From a psychometric standpoint, critics argue that there is no solid empirical evidence confirming the validity of multiple intelligences as distinct entities, and that findings from factor analyses more consistently support a general intelligence factor (g) rather than independent cognitive modules

(Waterhouse, 2006). Klein (1997) further contended that a “weak” version of MI theory is theoretically uninteresting, while a “strong” version is not adequately supported by the evidence Gardner presents, and that the theory is too broad to be useful for curriculum planning. More recently, Waterhouse (2023) argued that MI theory constitutes a neuromyth, as Gardner’s proposal for independent brain-based intelligences for different types of cognitive abilities lacks neurological support. Gardner himself has acknowledged that the theory was not designed as a testing framework and that he chose the term “intelligences” rather than “talents” partly as a deliberate challenge to the psychometric tradition (Gardner, 1999).

Notwithstanding this critical debate, MI theory continues to be widely adopted as a practical framework in language education research (Botelho, 2003; Estaji & Nafisi, 2014; Boulmaiz, 2018). Researchers in ELT textbook evaluation have employed MI theory not as a psychometric claim about the neurological independence of intelligences, but as an organizational lens for examining the diversity of cognitive demands embedded in instructional activities.

2.2. MI Theory and English textbooks

The implementation of MI theory in ELT is not limited to classroom activities and teaching techniques but it can be seen in the field of teaching materials. According to Snider (2001), incorporating MI theory in textbooks and teaching means that learners are taught and can demonstrate their comprehension in several different ways. Boulmaiz (2017) supports this idea by stating that the needs and potential of learners should be taken into account when designing textbooks. MI theory can perfectly serve this purpose and make a great contribution to language teaching and learning, as it facilitates the involvement of the needs, potentials, styles, and intelligences of learners. Recently, many studies have analyzed textbooks based on MI theory to determine different types of intelligences embedded in their activities.

The study by Botelho (2003), focused on the investigation of the application of MI Theory in textbook and materials evaluation in a Brazilian ELT context. This study aimed to analyze six current English textbooks in order to find out whether the textbook activities cater for learners’ intelligence types. The study also aimed to identify ELT teachers’ perceptions related to the MI Theory and its application in their classes. The results of this study revealed that only four intelligence types (linguistic, spatial, intrapersonal and interpersonal) were mainly addressed to in the textbook activities. Moreover, the results showed that teachers needed more guidance and insights in applying MI Theory in their classes.

Examining the representation of MI theory in EFL young learners’ textbooks, Estaji and Nafisi (2014) set out with the aim of investigating the extent to which young learners’ textbooks reflect and engage multiple intelligences (MI). In particular, it was an attempt to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the eight currently used books to determine whether the books should be reconstructed to boost MI varieties in the content and to what extent teachers are required to utilize supplementary materials to cover the deficiencies. Careful analysis of the selected textbooks revealed that the intelligence profile of these textbooks is primarily verbal/ linguistic. Naturalistic intelligence is recognized as the least intelligence type provided only at intermediate and advanced levels textbooks, and no example of spiritual and existential intelligences was found.

Investigating the representation of MI types in *Touchstone* series coursebooks, Ebadi and Sabzevari (2015) found that verbal/linguistic and spatial/visual intelligence were the most dominant intelligence types. Musical, bodily/kinesthetic, and naturalistic intelligences were the least common types embedded in the coursebooks’ activities. The results of the study also showed a significant difference between the series’ student books and workbooks in terms of MI; i.e., student books were more representative of different types of the intelligences than workbooks of the series.

Maharma (2021) analyzed the activities used in the English series of *Action Pack* textbooks in accordance with MI theory. This series is used in teaching the English language for grades nine, ten and twelve in Jordan. The researcher analyzed 608 activities to decide which type of multiple intelligences

is more common in the targeted activities. The results indicate that the Verbal/Linguistic and Visual/Spatial intelligences were the most prevalent in the three textbooks. Also, it was revealed that the types of intelligences were not found similarly in the targeted textbooks.

Similarly, Salih (2024) conducted research aiming to investigate the extent to which the *New Headway Plus for Upper-Intermediate-Third Edition* textbook caters to the diverse MI profiles of Iraqi EFL learners. The results of the study revealed that the textbook predominantly emphasizes Verbal/Linguistic intelligence, followed by Logical/Mathematical, Visual/Spatial, and Intrapersonal. Conversely, the findings showed that Musical, Bodily/Kinesthetic, and Naturalist intelligences appeared with low frequency, while Existential intelligence was entirely absent.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design and setting

This study employed a descriptive quantitative content analysis which focused on analyzing and describing the data collected. According to Glass and Hopkins (1984) (as cited in Ayu, 2020), descriptive research involves data collection that describes a certain phenomenon and then organizes, illustrates, and explains the collected information. This design was selected to explore and describe in detail the representation of MI types within the activities of a specific ELT textbook.

The object of the analysis was the textbook “*Voices*” (*Pre-intermediate A2/B1*), a seven-level, integrated-skills program published by National Geographic Learning. This textbook has currently been adopted as the official coursebook for English courses at a number of universities in Vietnam since 2021, including the research setting. It consists of 12 Units, and each unit covers four language skills namely Speaking, Reading, Writing and Listening and other language areas such as Grammar and Pronunciation. Regarding the official curriculum at the research setting, Units 1 to 4 are covered in English Course 1 (first semester), while Units 5 to 10 are taught in English Course 2 (second semester). As the study was conducted during the second semester, the research specifically examined Units 5 to 10 of the textbook, analyzing the representation of eight intelligence types in the textbook activities.

3.2. Research instrument

An MI checklist of classroom activities was adapted from Botelho’s (2003) and Ibragimova’s (2011) research to analyze the textbook activities. The checklist was also grounded in the theoretical framework of Gardner’s MI theory (Gardner, 1983, 1999). It included a list of representative activities under each intelligence type, serving as the coding scheme for classifying and evaluating the activities in the *Voices* textbook according to MI theory. The coding categories were labeled as follows: VL for Verbal/Linguistic; LM for Logical-Mathematical; VS for Visual/Spatial; BK for Bodily/Kinesthetic; M for Musical; IR for Interpersonal; IA for Intrapersonal; and N for Naturalistic intelligence. To establish coding reliability, the researcher requested a second coder, a colleague also teaching English Course 2, to independently code the textbook activities using the same checklist, without reference to the original coding record. The two sets of coding decisions were then compared. The high level of correlation coefficient between the two coding rounds ($r = 0.79$) indicated that the checklist functioned as a reliable instrument for this study. The reliability of the checklist has also been confirmed in prior research. Estaji and Nafisi (2014) reported a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.83$ between two independent raters using the same instrument, further supporting its validity as a textbook evaluation tool.

3.3. Data collection procedure

Each activity in Units 5 - 10 was examined in relation to the eight intelligence types by using the MI checklist. Some activities were assigned to a single intelligence type. For example, a “listen and repeat” task was coded solely as Verbal/Linguistic, as it requires no other cognitive domain beyond oral language processing. However, consistent with prior MI-based textbook studies (Botelho, 2003; Estaji & Nafisi, 2014; Ibragimova, 2011), many activities were found to engage more than one intelligence type simultaneously. For example, a “work in pairs to solve the puzzle” task was coded as both Interpersonal

and Logical-Mathematical, as the pair-work format activates collaborative intelligence while the problem-solving nature of the puzzle engages logical reasoning.

It is therefore important to note that the 315 activities analyzed in this study do not each correspond to a single intelligence type. Some activities were assigned one MI type, while others were assigned two or more, depending on the cognitive demands they place on learners. As a result, the total number of MI-type occurrences across all activities exceeds 315. The frequencies reported in Table 2 represent the number of times each intelligence type was activated across the 315 activities, not the number of discrete activities assigned exclusively to that type. This approach to frequency counting is consistent with the methodology adopted in comparable studies (Botelho, 2003; Estaji & Nafisi, 2014) and reflects the multi-dimensional nature of language learning tasks. Following data collection, the total number of occurrences of each intelligence type was calculated using SPSS, and the frequency and percentage of each type across Units 5-10 were determined accordingly.

Table 1: Sample of content analysis of activities in Unit 5

Subtitle	Page No.	Samples of the activities or tasks	Skill	MI Type(s) Identified
Warm-up	59	1. Work in pairs. Discuss the questions. 1. Look at the photo. What is special about the house? 2. Would you like to stay somewhere like this? Why? / Why not? 3. Do you know any other interesting homes like this?		VL VS LM IR IA
		2. Watch the video. Answer the questions. 1. Which two countries does Alexis think of as home? Why? 2. Which two countries does Ellie think of as home? Why?		VL VS LM
		3. Make connections. Discuss the questions. 1. Where do you think of as home? 2. What makes a place feel like home to you? 3. Is there anywhere that you think of as a second home?		VL LM IR IA
5A - A tidy house makes a calm home	60	1. Work in pairs. Do you think of yourself as a tidy person? Do you fold your clothes carefully, as in the photo?	Reading	VL IR IA
		2. Quickly read the review of a TV program about Marie Kondo on page 51. What is the program about? Did the review like the show?		VL
		3. Look at the Reading skill box. Work in pairs. Find a word in the review that you don't know and discuss what it might mean using the words around it to help.		VL IR IA
		4. Read the review again, then match these words with the definitions. One definition has two answers. What helped you work out the meaning?		VL LM IA
		5. Tick the way Marie Kondo helps people tidy.		VL
		6. Look at the Critical thinking skill box and read questions from one to three. Then underline the information in the review that tells you the answer.		VL LM IA
		7. Work in pairs. Discuss the questions. 1. What is your opinion of Marie Kondo's advice? 2. Have you read her books or watched her programme? If not, do you want to now? 3. Does the review make you want to tidy up? 4. Do you have any tidying tips?	Speaking	VL IR IA
		8. Look at the quotations. What is your opinion? Which do you believe more? Why?		VL LM IA

Subtitle	Page No.	Samples of the activities or tasks	Skill	MI Type(s) Identified
5B - If you are in town, call me!	62	1. Work in pairs. Look at the photo of Seoul. Discuss the questions. 1. What can you say about the city from looking at this photo? 2. What would be your perfect place to live? 3. Why would you like to move to another place? Why or why not?	Reading and Grammar	VL VS LM IR IA
		2. Read the email. Answer the questions. 1. Why does Stella write to Rawan? 2. How does Stella feel about living in Seoul?		VL LM
		3. Read the email from Stella again. What does Stella say about each topic?		VL
	63	4. Read the grammar box. Complete the sentence.		VL
		5. Complete the conditional sentences with the correct form of the verbs.		VL
		6. Listen to the conversation. Why is Goran excited?	Listening and Grammar	VL LM
		7. Listen again. Match the sentence halves.		VL
		8. Read the grammar box. Complete the sentence.		VL
		9. Correct the mistakes in the first conditional sentences.		VL LM
		10. Work in pairs. What is the difference in meaning between the options in the sentences?		VL LM IR
		11. Look at the Clear Voice Box. Listen to the example. Notice the difference between / and /I/		VL
		12. Listen to four sentences. In which sentences can you hear 'I'? Listen again and write the sentences		VL
		13. Complete the sentences so that they are true for you. Use conditionals. Then discuss in pairs.		VL IR IA
5C - That was the weirdest place!	64	1. When you are away from home, what kind of accommodation do you like or dislike staying in?	Vocabulary	VL IA
		2. Rewrite the paragraph by replacing the regular adjectives with these extreme adjectives. How does this change the paragraph? Listen and check.		VL LM
		3. Write five sentences to describe a place you have stayed or visited using extreme adjectives from exercise 2. Work in pairs and discuss your experiences.		VL IR IA
		4. Look at the Listening skill box. Listen to Alexis Chappuis and Ellie de Castro. Write Alexis (A) or Ellie (E) next to where they stayed (1-4).	Listening	VL
		5. Listen again. Select the best summary A or B of the key points.		VL
		6. Read the Grammar box. Look at sentences 1 and 2 below. Which is a comparative (C) or which is a superlative (S)?		VL LM
	65	7. Complete the sentences using a comparative or a simulative. Use <i>less/least</i> or <i>more/most</i> and add <i>the</i> or <i>than</i> where necessary	Listening	VL IR IA
		8. Work in pairs. Make your own questions using the adjectives in exercise 7. Ask and answer the questions.		VL IR IA
		9. Look at the Clear voice box. Listen and repeat.		VL
		10. Listen to the words. Underline the word you hear.		VL
		11. Listen and repeat the words.		VL
		12. Work in groups to plan a trip to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Look at the adverts for holiday accommodation. Choose where you want to stay and persuade the others in the group why it is the best. Use comparative and superlatives.	Speaking	VL IR IA

Subtitle	Page No.	Samples of the activities or tasks	Skill	MI Type(s) Identified
5D - Showing Flexibility	66	1. Read the welcome signs from different countries. Do you know where they come from? What phrases do people use to welcome guests to their home in your language? How do they translate into English?	Speaking	VL IR IA
		2. Work in pairs. Answer the questions 1. What makes you feel welcome when you stay somewhere? 2. What do you try to do to be a good guest? 3. Do you have any memorable experiences of being a guest in someone's home?		VL IR IA
		3. Listen to two conversations between a guest and a host. What might the host be upset?	Listening	VL LM
		4. Work in pairs. Have you had similar experiences? What do you think the host and guests could do differently?		VL IR IA
		5. Watch the video about being a good guest. What general advice does it suggest?	My voice	VL VS
		6. Watch again. Which advice from one to seven does the video give?		VL VS
		7. Look at the committee communication skill box and situations 1 and 2 on page 67. What could Soheila and Anzo do differently?		VL LM

By using MI activities checklist, each activity was carefully analyzed and categorized into different MI domains. The first example is Activity 2/Unit 5 - A/Page 60, which is called *"Quickly read the review of a TV program about Marie Kondo on page 51. What is the program about? Did the review like the show?"*. Linguistic is the only intelligence identified in this activity. Specifically, students are asked to *"Quickly read the review of a TV program about Marie Kondo on page 51"*, which involve reading comprehension. They need to comprehend the main ideas, details, and opinions expressed in the review, which are all linguistic skills. For the questions *"What is the program about?"*, *"Did the review like the show?"*, they require students to interpret information from the review and analyze the reviewer's language, tone, and opinions expressed in the text to make an inference about his/her feelings towards to show. Some activities might involve more than one intelligence domain. Take Activity 1/Unit 5-B/Page 62 as an example:

"Work in pairs. Look at the photo of Seoul. Discuss the questions.

- 1. What can you say about the city from looking at this photo?*
- 2. What would be your perfect place to live?*
- 3. Why would you like to move to another place? Why or why not?"*

This activity involves Linguistic, Visual, Logical, Interpersonal and Intrapersonal intelligences. For Linguistic domain, the activity involves 3 questions, namely *"What can you say about the city from looking at this photo?"*, *"What would be your perfect place to live?"* and *"Why would you like to move to another place? Why or why not?"*. By answering the questions, students are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas, as well as use spoken language and develop their communication skills. The instruction *"Look at the photo of Seoul"* involves Visual intelligence because students are required to visually analyze the photo of Seoul, which involves observing and interpreting visual details. Regarding Logical intelligence, while it is not explicitly emphasized in the given task, students might employ logical thinking and reasoning skills to answer the questions *"Why would you like to move to another place? Why or why not?"*. As to Interpersonal domain, the activity involves collaboration as students work in pairs to discuss the questions. This fosters interpersonal intelligence by encouraging students to listening to and responding to their partner's ideas, perspectives, and preferences. For Intrapersonal intelligence, the activity also allows for introspection and self-reflection, as it appears in the question *"What would be your perfect place to live?"*. Students need to reflect on their individual needs and aspirations to decide their perfect place to live.

4. Findings

The total number of activities in the textbook *Voices* from Unit 5 to Unit 10 is 315 activities. Findings for the representation of MI in the textbook activities within these units are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: MI Profiles of the Voices Pre-intermediate Textbook Activities by Intelligence Type (Units 5-10)

Multiple Intelligences Type	Number of activities in which MI type appears (out of 315)	Percentage of total activities (%)
Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence	315	100
Logical-Mathematical Intelligence	134	42.5
Intrapersonal Intelligence	126	40
Interpersonal Intelligence	113	35.9
Visual/Spatial Intelligence	40	12.7
Musical Intelligence	10	3.2
Bodily-kinesthetic Intelligence	6	1.9
Naturalistic Intelligence	0	0

As shown in Table 2, Verbal/Linguistic intelligence was the most dominant type, appearing in 100% of the 315 analyzed activities. This indicates that every activity in Units 5–10 engages learners' language skills in different forms. Logical-Mathematical intelligence ranked second, identified in 134 activities, representing 42.5% of the total. Intrapersonal and Interpersonal intelligence types also featured prominently, appearing in 126 activities (40%) and 113 activities (35.9%) respectively. Ranking fifth is Visual/Spatial intelligence, which was present in 40 activities (12.7%).

In contrast, three intelligence types were markedly underrepresented. Musical intelligence appeared in only 10 activities (3.2%), while Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence was identified in just 6 activities (1.9%). Naturalistic intelligence was entirely absent from the analyzed units, accounting for 0% of all activities. It should be noted that since individual activities may engage more than one intelligence type simultaneously, the figures in Table 2 reflect the number of activities in which each intelligence type was identified, and percentages therefore do not sum to 100%.

Overall, the MI profile of the *Voices* Pre-intermediate textbook (Units 5-10) reveals an evident concentration in the Verbal/Linguistic domain, followed by Logical-Mathematical, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, and Visual/Spatial intelligence types. The three remaining types, namely Musical, Bodily-Kinesthetic, and Naturalistic, accounted for fewer than 6% of activity occurrences, pointing to a significant imbalance in the distribution of intelligence types across the analyzed units.

5. Discussion

The results show that 100% of the 315 activities in Units 5 - 10 of the *Voices* textbook engaged Verbal/Linguistic intelligence, a finding consistent with those of previous MI-based textbook analyses (Abbasian & Khajavi, 2012; Estaji & Nafisi, 2014; Hamza, 2021; Omer, 2017). This is expected and unsurprising: every language textbook is necessarily built around the four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as well as language areas such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. The dominance of Verbal/Linguistic intelligence in EFL coursebooks can therefore be considered universal rather than a design flaw. However, the finding that this single intelligence type accounts for the entirety of all analyzed activities raises an important pedagogical question: if all activities in a textbook engage only one type of intelligence by default, learners whose cognitive strengths lie in other domains may be consistently underserved.

Logical-Mathematical intelligence ranked second at 42.5%, which aligns with Phan's (2023) findings on the MI profile of the *Life* textbook used at a Vietnamese university. This relatively strong representation can be attributed to the prevalence of matching, ordering, categorizing, problem-solving, and sequencing tasks in communicative EFL coursebooks, which stimulate analytical reasoning alongside language production. Intrapersonal intelligence ranked third at 40%, reflecting the *Voices* textbook's frequent use of activities that elicit personal opinions, self-reflection, and individual responses. This tendency is

appropriate for the target audience - tertiary-level learners. According to Knowles (1980), adult learners characteristically exhibit greater self-directedness and capacity for reflection compared with younger students, making them well suited for tasks requiring introspection and independent judgment.

Interpersonal intelligence was present in 35.9% of activities, driven primarily by the textbook's extensive use of pair work, group work, and information-gap tasks. This finding is broadly consistent with Ibragimova's (2011) results, though the present study recorded a higher percentage of interpersonal activities, possibly reflecting the more communicative orientation of the Voices series. Visual/Spatial intelligence ranked fifth at 12.7%, a moderate figure that is somewhat surprising given that the textbook is published by National Geographic Learning - a publisher associated with rich visual content related to science, geography, and wildlife. The relatively limited representation of visual activities suggests that the pedagogical design of this particular level might prioritise text-based over image-based engagement.

The three remaining intelligence types, Musical, Bodily-Kinesthetic, and Naturalistic, were markedly underrepresented, collectively accounting for fewer than 6% of all activity occurrences. Musical intelligence appeared in only 3.2% of activities, limited largely to pronunciation tasks and stress pattern recognition. As discussed earlier, the reduced presence of music-related activities in tertiary-level coursebooks is a documented pattern in the field (Waterhouse, 2006; Gardner, 1999), though this does not diminish the pedagogical value of incorporating rhythm- and melody-based tasks into university EFL instruction. Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence was identified in just 1.9% of activities, confined to a small number of role-play tasks. Naturalistic intelligence was entirely absent from Units 5 - 10, with no activities referencing natural phenomena, environmental concepts, or the observation of living species.

These findings confirm that the Voices textbook was not designed with MI theory as an explicit organising principle, a pattern consistent with Botelho's (2003) observation that mainstream EFL textbooks typically do not systematically apply MI frameworks. Nevertheless, the significant imbalance in MI distribution identified in this study carries important implications for teachers, curriculum designers, and materials developers working in Vietnamese tertiary contexts. For instructors using the Voices textbook, the findings suggest a need for deliberate and systematic supplementation to address the full range of learner intelligence profiles. To compensate for the underrepresentation of Musical intelligence, teachers can incorporate rhythm-based pronunciation drills, jazz chants, or songs that contextualise target vocabulary and grammatical structures suitable for learners at tertiary level. For Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence, supplementary activities such as role-plays, simulations, miming tasks, and classroom movement games can provide learners with opportunities to engage language through physical action. The complete absence of Naturalistic intelligence in the analyzed units represents the most significant gap. Teachers can address this by designing project-based tasks that involve environmental observation, nature-themed reading and discussion, or language activities built around topics such as ecology, wildlife, and sustainability - themes that are, notably, well aligned with National Geographic Learning's broader content focus.

For curriculum designers and textbook evaluators, this study highlights the value of incorporating MI theory as a diagnostic framework during the materials evaluation process. A textbook that consistently overrepresents Verbal/Linguistic and Logical-Mathematical intelligence while neglecting Musical, Bodily-Kinesthetic, and Naturalistic intelligence may fail to engage learners whose cognitive strengths lie outside the linguistic and analytical domains. Adopting MI-informed supplementary material development as a standard component of course design particularly where learner diversity is considerable would contribute to more inclusive language instruction at tertiary level.

6. Conclusion

The present study conducted a content analysis of the textbook *Voices (Pre-intermediate A2/B1) Units 5 - 10* to evaluate the representation and distribution of MI within its activities. The findings indicate a significant imbalance in the types of intelligence addressed, with a heavy concentration on traditional academic domains. Verbal/Linguistic intelligence was found to be the most dominant,

present in 100% of the activities, followed by Logical-Mathematical intelligence. This suggests that the curriculum remains primarily centered around conventional linguistic processing and logical reasoning. While the moderate inclusion of Intrapersonal and Interpersonal intelligences aligns with the social and reflective needs of tertiary-level learners, other domains, namely Musical, Bodily-Kinesthetic, and Naturalistic intelligences, remain notably underrepresented or entirely absent. Such a distribution reveals a significant imbalance in the representation of intelligence types across the analyzed units. While the textbook adequately addresses Verbal/Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Intrapersonal, and Interpersonal intelligence types, learners whose cognitive strengths lie primarily in Musical, Bodily-Kinesthetic, or Naturalistic domains have considerably fewer opportunities to engage with content through their preferred modes of learning. This finding is consistent with Botelho's (2003) observation that mainstream EFL textbooks, regardless of their communicative orientation, tend not to systematically distribute activities across all intelligence types.

In conclusion, while *Voices* provides a robust framework for communicative language learning, it necessitates more pedagogical modification at tertiary level. To foster a truly inclusive and student-centered environment, EFL teachers should not rely solely on the coursebook but should instead integrate supplementary materials and diverse task types that activate the full range of students' intelligences. Future research should continue to explore how these materials are adapted in practice and extend the analysis to broader curriculum sets to ensure that ELT materials in Vietnam evolve to meet the diverse intellectual profiles of EFL learners.

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