

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstracts

This paper aims to review the significance and importance of emotional intelligence in the process of language teaching and learning. It has been investigated that emotional intelligence plays fundamental role in all aspects of lives; it also has an effective contribution to language teaching and learning, since for learning a language, learners typically need to communicate with people. In domain of language teaching and learning, the concept of emotional intelligence has not broadly identified, applied, or generalized, whereas there are considerable efforts have been made to promote this key concept since two decades ago. To achieve this aim, it is required that researchers and teachers take into account the concept of emotional intelligence and it is required that language teachers promote emotional intelligence in the classroom in order to create efficient and effective learning environment.

Introduction

The Concept of the emotional intelligence has attracted considerable and widespread interest in various fields of studies since 1970. Before (1970) psychologists emphasized merely on cognition and they test the intelligence as a measurable concept to solve cognitive problems (Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000). While other scientists and scholars such as Thorndike (1920), Wechsler (1972), and Gardner (1983) argued that intelligence is not limited to pure cognitive aspects. Thorndike introduced the concept of social intelligence as an important component of intelligence. Wechsler (1972) extended this idea of social intelligence and proposed additional components of intelligence such as emotional, personal, social, in order to supplement cognitive intelligence. These component includes intrapersonal intelligence which is defined as the ability to understand one's own emotions, and interpersonal intelligence, the ability to develop and maintain a good relationship with others (Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000). These aspects of non-intellectual intelligence were proposed and paves a way for definition of emotional intelligence. (Law, Wong, & Song, 2004; Mayer & Cobb, 2000).

The pioneers who coined the phrase of emotional intelligence were Mayer and Salovey (1990) defined it as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's feelings and actions" (p. 189). However, in 1997, Mayer and Salovey restructured their model and categorized it into four types of abilities: (a) the ability to access or generate feeling to facilitate thought, (b) the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge, (c) the ability to regulate emotions, and (d) the ability to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Emotional intelligence is regarded as a factor for measuring people's intelligence. (Mayer and Salovey 1997).

Goleman (1995), who made popular the concept of emotional intelligence with publishing the book *Emotional Intelligence*, he defined the term EI as the ability to recognize and to regulate emotions in one-self and others. Goleman adhered to the ability models of Jack Mayer, Peter Salovey, consequently they were the first to publish scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals in 1990 (Brackett et al., 2007). Goleman (1995), emphasized on changes in human behavior over time, and he also referred to studies in the field of developmental psychology. He perceived that EI is interrelated cognitive skills that regulate individuals' feelings, motivations, and frustrations. According to Goleman EI abilities involve in the affective domain such as self-awareness, managing emotions or self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and internal and external perspectives. Self-awareness is described as recognizing one's own feelings and knowing how to factor feelings into decision-making in a highly effective way. Self-regulation implies the ability to be emotionally stable and to manage one's feelings in a positive manner. Motivation allows for the recognition of wants and channels that in a desired direction. Empathy allows for the sensing of other people's feelings, to understand their desires and needs, and to act accordingly. Social skills are the ability to handle interrelationships and have excellent leadership skills. He believed



that these EI components are teachable skills same as other subjects taught in schools, since these skills result in improving academic achievement at school and preparing students for social life as well in future.

According to aforementioned definitions of the emotional intelligence, there is a relationship with one's inner self or intrapersonal and a relation with others, interpersonal components. There are some various opinions regarding Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (1995) models of emotional intelligence. It is described that having the ability to adapt to an environment successfully, socially, physically and mentally. Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (1995) included five fundamental components. Bar-On introduced the elements of the emotional intelligence with slight difference and emphasized (a) intrapersonal ability, (b) interpersonal ability, (c) adaptability, (d) stress management, and (e) general mood. In Bar-On's model (1997), intrapersonal ability include, a clear vision of oneself emotional, self-awareness, confidence, self-actualization, and the ability to be independent. Interpersonal ability includes following elements; as one's ability to empathize and to maintain relationships and social responsibilities. Adaptation is defined as ability to find solutions and to be flexible. Stress management stresses to keep balance and control of one's feelings. Finally, general mood is to able to recognize feelings and to be positive.

Emotional intelligence models is considered to be slightly different among the theorist and scholars, however the common point that all of them are agreed upon is that emotional intelligence is the ability of individuals is to control their emotions wisely and they also deal with the emotions of others. Therefore, if individuals are able to know, control and encourage, empathize for others' emotions while interpreting and understanding their feelings, positive outcomes will result from emotional intelligent. As Ciarrochi, Chan, and Cuputi (2000) mentioned that some trivial differences are observed in the definitions of emotional intelligence among researchers; however these definitions complement each other.

The role of emotional intelligence in language learning

Many researchers have conducted several studies regarding the importance of affective domain in the process of second language learning (Dodigovic, 2005; Greenleaf, 2003; Matthews, 2005; Park & Abelmann, 2004; Piper, 2001; Ringbom, 2006; Uso Juan, 2006). These researchers made an attempt to identify the learner's affective aspects of language learning that might promote, and to facilitate the process of second language learning. This affective domain is attributed to one's emotional awareness to identify and to express emotions, and to regulate both positive and negative emotions in the self and in others (Matthews, 2005). It has been found that that learners who obtain positive feedback from the environment, acquire second languages better and they apply correct grammar in their speaking. Moreover, these learners become successful to learn several languages. Thus, emotions play important role in students' language learning. Since, the learner has a positive attitude towards learning the cognitive memory will be stimulated and the learner will learn the language intellectually. On the contrary, learners who receive negative emotions, are not able to connect learning of a language and relate meaning simultaneously.

Different individuals owns various levels of emotional awareness, because individuals are different in their personalities, wants, desires and they show and accept the emotions differently. According to Choi (2008), Tragant (2006) Carhill, Suarez-Orozco, and Paez (2008), second language learning is affected by how individuals configure their social, cultural, emotional, and linguistic environment. In terms of the cognitive process, L1 learner acquire language implicitly, however L2 learners learn the language explicitly. Regarding a social process, L1 learners receive more support from their caregivers and they have more time for preparation to utter sentences, Whereas L1 learners receive less support from their caregivers and they have this expectation to speak the language immediately. From linguistic point of view, for L1 learner every aspect of language learning is completely new, while for L2 learners, much cognitive process is required to transfer intangible words into tangible words.

According to Flattery (2007) when individuals learn a new language they cope with various emotions and related learning contexts. Students who are emotionally willing to cope with the learning context, they are likely are prepared to deal with challenging environment of



learning a second language, consequently they will have more appropriate opportunity to be successful in second language acquisition. As a result, Johnson (2004) has named the second language learning as the process of habit formation. It can be concluded that when there is large gap between the first language and the targeted language, subsequently learners encounter with great challenge to change their linguistic habits.

In an Exploratory study which is conducted by Reyes (2007) with 5, 268 participants who learned English as a second language in grades two to six. He found that an appropriate and organized language program is required and how it implemented in curriculum influence students' learning. He identified potential factors that lead to failure in second language learning such as teachers' lack of linguistic and social-cultural knowledge and pedagogical and instructional knowledge. Second language teachers are required to consider the classroom as a socio-cultural environment and attempt to engage students as active participants in the target language culture "(Johnson, 2004, p. 180). It also means students can learn from their teachers, from their peers, and from interactions.

The theory of second language acquisition highlights a balance between cognition and emotional reactions (Reyes, 2007). It demonstrates that, if students dealing with challenges that related to differences between first and target language whether it involves functional, semantic, grammatical categories, or semantic units, they need emotional support. Teachers required to provide a positive and interactive language learning environment; and also teachers can provide opportunities for learners to interact in targeted language with their peers or teachers. Furthermore, teachers should provide social and emotional support for the learners by creating supportive classroom climate, interacting between teacher and student, and interactions among peers.

There are numerous research studies conducted to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and language performance (see Sucaromana, 2004, Shakib 2011, Zarezadeh 2013, Zandi 2012, Abdolrezapour 2013, Rouhani 2008). They found that there is a meaning relationship between Emotional intelligence and language learning and related skills. On the other hand, how to implement emotional intelligence and how to apply it in the classroom needs more reflection. The important question that arising here is that intelligent people are more successful at language learning. In the process of language learning, the interaction between the teacher and learner and peers is significant for the purpose of communication. A learner must be emotionally intelligent n important factor in learning languages is the ability to be emotionally intelligent to recognize, employ, comprehend, and manage emotions. These features and capabilities play important role comparing to being just intelligent learner .There is not any guaranteed that intelligent people become successful in their life, and conversely; having a high IQ rating is not the indicator of success in all field (Goleman, 1995). It is stated that emotional intelligence is a more important key to success, and not cognitive intelligence, more accurately predicts success in school. (Goleman ,1995)

The significance of emotional intelligence is often disregarded in the schools . However, students who learn a foreign or second language require emotional intelligence in the classroom among the students and teachers. Beginners expect more tolerance and patience as well as an understanding from their teachers and their peers. According to Goleman (2008), applying social and emotional (SEL) curriculum in schools promote students' ability to integrate thinking, feeling, and behavior to achieve important social tasks and lead to decrease of negative feeling and improve academic scores. The EI education has been provided through a variety of different efforts such as classroom instruction, a supportive school climate, and school and home partnership. The outcomes of this education will enhance self-confidence and improve academic performance (Goleman, 1995; Sadowski, 2002).

According to Wang (2005) \success in language learning is mainly associated to teachers interaction and paying attention of students' emotional needs. When students' emotional needs are met, then students in turn concentrate on learning the language. It is essential that teachers take into account affective factors in the language classroom. Since, "what to learn and how to learn" is mainly depend on students' emotions (p. 5). Teachers and parents must help students in order to become successful language learner and teach them how to use their prior linguistic knowledge



to organize new language information, take charge of their emotional conflicts, and take subtle opportunities to practice and to use the target language.

Teachers need professional development to teach the English language successfully to students, teachers must have language knowledge, pedagogical skills, and effective lesson preparation. Teachers need to have a good knowledge of both the primary and target languages of the students. Some teachers might need professional training on effective ways of implementing EI in teaching English as a foreign language curriculum. It would be beneficial that teachers promote their emotional intelligence in order to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom and to encourage students to promote their own emotional intelligence as well.

Conclusion

Education and learning is mutual relationship. A teacher who has a low level of emotional intelligence, such as empathy, cooperation, management of emotions and respect, is not able to promote students' emotional intelligence. The development and implementation of emotional intelligence in teachers should be promoted so students can learn better. Emotional skill management should be emphasized more in the curriculums; components such as self-management, problem solving, reciprocal learning, and a need to focus on goals should also be added. Students can make remarkable progress if their teachers can understand and relate to students who may be shy, violent, lazy, or negative, especially if teachers are able to empathize with them and consider that there may be a root cause for these behaviors. Through emotional intelligence in the student and the teacher, the optimum learning can be achieved.

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