The role of emotional intelligence on English learning as a second language

Maryam Mohammadi

Department of Literature and Human Sciences, Ardabil branch, Islamic Azad University, Ardabil, Iran

*Corresponding Author Email: M_maryam5980@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study investigated the role of emotional intelligence and its components to predict English learning as a second language among L2 students of Islamic Azad University. The statistical population involved all of the Islamic Azad University, Ardabil Branch L2 students (N = 380) in 2009-10 academic year. From these, 191 students are selected as sample via random sampling based on Kreschi-Morgan table. Research method was correlation. To collect the data, Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory and academic mean score of student were used. Reliability of this instrument is calculated as α=0.93 using Cronbach’s alpha in Iranian society. For data analysis, multiple regression in enter model were used. The results showed that emotional intelligence and its dimensions predict students’ academic achievement statistically significant (R^2 = .65, F (5,185) = 67.5, P < .01).

Keywords: English learning; Emotional intelligence; second language

Introduction

The importance and advantages of English learning as a second language is continuing to increase day by day. But learning a second language can be difficult. Teachers and expertises believed that some individuals learn a second language easily and some with more difficulty. Teachers and parents always have been concerned about student’s success in English learning as a second language and social adaptation both in and out of the classroom. Only recently, however, have researchers realized that a person’s emotional life has an impact on these important outcomes (Marquez, Martin, Brackett, 2006). Researchers have demonstrated that emotional intelligence quotient more than intelligence quotient accounts for success in life and education (pishgadm, 2009). Certain emotional competencies are necessary for learning to take place. Individuals must control negative emotions like fear, anxiety, and frustration so that positive emotions like enthusiasm and a sense of accomplishment can increase (O’Regan, 2003). Attending to emotions in the classroom enables both student and instructor to manage feelings and provides useful methods to address difficulties that could deter success (Gates, 2000).
Bar-On (2006) defines emotional intelligence as being concerned with effectively understanding oneself and others, relating well to people, and adapting to and coping with the immediate surroundings to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands (Bar-On, 1997). Bar-On posits that EI develops over time and that it can be improved through training, programming, and therapy (Bar-On, 2006). Bar-On hypothesizes that those individuals with higher average EQ’s are in general more successful in meeting environmental demands and pressures.

The role of emotional intelligence on academic achievement has been cited in a number of recent books and review articles (Brackett & Salovey, 2006; Marquez, et al., 2006; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004; Williford, 2000). Pishgadam (2009) determined the impact of emotional and verbal intelligences on English language learning success in Iran. Also he demonstrated that successful students had higher scores on intrapersonal, stress management, general mood.

The component of emotional intelligence based on Bar-On’s (2004) framework summarized as follow:

Intrapersonal (self-awareness and self-expression)
- Self-Regard: To accurately perceive, understand and accept oneself
- Emotional Self-Awareness: To be aware of and understand one’s emotions
- Assertiveness: To effectively and constructively express one’s emotions and oneself
- Independence: To be self-reliant and free of emotional dependency on others
- Self-Actualization: To strive to achieve personal goals and actualize one’s potential

Interpersonal (social awareness and interpersonal relationship)
- Empathy: To be aware of and understand how others feel
- Social Responsibility: To identify with one’s social group and cooperate with others
- Interpersonal Relationship: To establish mutually satisfying relationships and relate well with others

Stress Management (emotional management and regulation)
- Stress Tolerance: To effectively and constructively manage emotions
- Impulse Control: To effectively and constructively control emotions

Adaptability (change management)
- Reality-Testing: To objectively validate one’s feelings and thinking with external reality
- Flexibility: To adapt and adjust one’s feelings and thinking to new situations
- Problem-Solving: To effectively solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature

General Mood (self-motivation)
- Optimism: To be positive and look at the brighter side of life
- Happiness: To feel content with oneself, others and life in general

As mentioned above psychologists believed that people who have emotional intelligence skills are more successful than the high IQ folks, who do not have emotional intelligence, and therefore high IQ may not be a good measure for future life success especially academic successful. Despite its contributions to success in other venues, there has been little investigation into the construct of EI as a predictor for success in the English learning as a second language. Due to paucity of research on EQ and second language learning, present study investigated the role of emotional intelligence and its components to predict English learning as a second language among L2 students successfully.

**Materials and Methods**

**Participants**

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The Statistical population involved all of the Islamic Azad University, Ardabil Branch L\textsubscript{2} students (N = 380) in 2009-10 academic year. From these, 191 students are selected as sample via random sampling based on Kreschi-Morgan table.

**Materials**

The instrument of this research is a Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory which includes 90 questions in 5 categories. The categories are Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Stress Management, Adaptability, and General Mood Scale. Each question was designed based on a 5-point Likert scale scoring from 5 to 1 (completely agree = 5 to completely disagree = 1). This questionnaire was standardized to be used in Iran; its content validity was reported to be acceptable and its reliability was 0.93 by Cronbach's alpha (Samuei, 2003; Pishgad, 2009) and mean score of student were used for accessing of academic achievement. In this study the reliability of the questionnaire was found to be high (\(\alpha = .89\)). And reliability of the five main elements of emotional intelligence: Intrapersonal (\(\alpha = .81\)), Interpersonal (\(\alpha = .87\)), Adaptability (\(\alpha = .78\)), Stress Management (\(\alpha = .76\)), and General Mood (\(\alpha = .82\)) was computed.

**Procedure**

Based on the nature of subject and research questions, correlation method was thought to best serve the purpose of the present study. The questionnaire was distributed among participants and gathered data was analyzed by using multiple regression in enter model.

**Results and Discussion**

Table 2. Predicting the academic achievement on the base of emotional intelligence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>4012.733</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>802.547</td>
<td>67.51</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>2199.215</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>11.888</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6211.948</td>
<td>190</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Unstandardized</th>
<th>Standardized</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.824</td>
<td>1.356</td>
<td>-1.345</td>
<td>.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>4.689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>.162</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.189</td>
<td>2.392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>3.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>.174</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.192</td>
<td>2.616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Mood</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.084</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R = .804, \(R^2 = .65\), Adjusted \(R^2 = .64\)

According to table 1, \(R^2 = .65\), adjusted \(R^2 = .64\) and \(F(5,185) = 67.51\) is significant (p < .01). So can be concluded that emotional intelligence and its dimensions predict students’ language learning statistically significant.

From among the components of emotional intelligence, the shares of interpersonal, stress management, adaptability and intrapersonal (Beta = .309, Beta = .313, Beta = .192 and Beta = .189) respectively in predicting of academic achievement were statistically significant. But the shares of general mood (Beta = .006) wasn’t statistically significant.

To express better emotional intelligence is predictor for second language learning significantly. This finding is not only strange but also quite natural. As Marquez and et al. (2006) demonstrated
that a person’s emotional life has an impact on academic outcomes, Bar-On (2006) hypothesizes that those individuals with higher average Esq.’s are in general more successful in meeting environmental demands and pressures or Gates (2000) believed that attending to emotions in the classroom enables both student and instructor to manage feelings and provides useful methods to address difficulties that could better success. Also Brackett, and Salovey (2006), Marquez, et al. (2006), Mayer, and et al. (2004) and Williford (2000) determined the role of emotional intelligence on academic achievement. This result is coherent with findings of Pishghadam (2009) especially.

According to the aforementioned, the shares of interpersonal, stress management, adaptability and intrapersonal in predicting of academic achievement were statistically significant. Because English is spoken only in class and English language teachers in Iran are perfectionism, demanding the correct use of the language, putting much pressure on students to apply English accurately (Pishghadam, 2009), English classes generally seem threaten environment. Therefore it seems to be natural that components of emotional intelligence predict English learning achievement significantly.

References


