



The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Productive Language Skills

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence has recently attracted educators' attention around the world. Educators who try to investigate the factors in language learning achievement have decided to pave the way to success through emotional intelligence. The relationship between emotional intelligence and language learning is the major concern of this study. The study is to examine the role of emotional intelligence in second language learning and its effect on productive language skills: speaking and writing. At the end of the academic year, 150 students from different disciplines of the university and studying English as a foreign language in the School of Foreign Languages were asked to complete the Emotional Intelligence Inventory (EQ-i). Collected data were matched with the students' academic scores in speaking and writing. Predicting foreign language learning success from emotional intelligence variables produced divergent results. When EQ-i variables were compared in groups (successful vs. unsuccessful) who had achieved very different levels of academic success and scores in different skills, foreign language learning was strongly associated with several dimensions of emotional intelligence. All collected data were coded and computerized using the SPSS software and the alpha level for the tests was set at .05. After calculating each participant's emotional intelligence scores and their success in speaking and writing skills, their scores were compared to the variables selected for the study and each other. A positive and close relation between EQ and foreign language proficiency can be drawn out according to the results.

INTRODUCTION

The term emotional intelligence has been defined in different ways: Binet (1905) defines it as a one-dimensional concept, Gardner (1983) as a multiple concept, and Salovey and Mayer, (1990) as an emotional notion. There are two examples of mixed models of emotional intelligence; Bar-On (1997) and Goleman's (1995) models. Daniel Goleman introduced the term 'emotional intelligence' in 1995. Goleman (1995), has defined the term as including

“abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustration, to control impulses and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to emphasize and to hope”. He sees emotional intelligence as an idea or theme that emerges from a large set of research findings on the role of the emotions in human life. He (1995) identifies five domains of EQ as knowing one's emotion, managing emotion, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships. According to him, a person with higher emotional intelligence should become happier, more optimistic, motivated and outgoing. Cooper (1996/1997) and Orioli, et.al (1999) defined emotional intelligence as a mix of mental and non-mental abilities.

Bar-On (2004) summarizes the components of emotional intelligence as 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).

According to Mayer and Salovey (1997), emotional intelligence consists of two parts as emotion and intelligence. Emotions refer to the feeling-reactions a person has, often in response to a real or imagined relationship. For example, if a person has a good relationship with someone else, that individual is likely to feel happy; if the person is threatened, he or she will be likely to feel afraid. Intelligence, on the other hand, refers to the ability to reason validly with or about something. For example, one reasons with language in the case of verbal intelligence, or reasons about how objects fit together in the case of spatial intelligence.

There are two general models of EI in the literature: Mayer and Salovey’s a skill-based model and a variety of mixed approaches. According to Mayer and Salovey, EI pertains to individual’s capacity to reason about emotions and to process emotional information to enhance cognitive processes and regulate behaviour.

Emotional Intelligence and Language Skills in ELT

After giving general information on emotional intelligence, it is necessary to give the literature on the relationship between EI and productive language skills in ELT. In a study, Pishghadam (2009) determines the impact of emotional and verbal intelligences on English language learning success in Iran. In order to understand the nature of learning, he calculates and analyzes the product and the process data. The results of the study demonstrate that the emotional intelligence is instrumental in learning productive skills. In the process-based phase, the analyses of oral and written modes of language exhibit the effects of emotional and verbal intelligences on turn-taking, amount of communication, the number of errors, and writing ability. Karimi (2012) findings also support Pishghadam’s results. In his study (2012), Karimi found that understanding and managing students’ own emotions and being aware of and

responsive to others' emotions will contribute to the L2 productive skills, particularly writing, as well as motivation and self-actualization of both university professors of L2 writing and their students.

In another study conducted by Sadeghi and Farzizadeh (2014) revealed the relationship between EI and the writing ability of Iranian EFL learners. The students are first given Bar-On's Emotional Quotient Inventory (a Likert scale questionnaire) and are asked to respond to its items based on the relevance of the statements to themselves. After that the students are given a writing test and the resulting scores were seen to correlate with their EI scores. Results obtained through Pearson Correlation indicated a positive relationship between the writing ability and the emotional self-awareness, a subcategory of EI.

Shao and Ji (2013) aimed to examine the possibility of using literature-based activities to raise EFL students' emotional intelligence and to see whether there was any relationship between students' EI and writing achievement. A writing ability test and TEIQue-ASF (Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Adolescent Short Form) were administered prior to the experiment. The experimental group was given some pieces of short literature readings with high emotional content and the control group was assigned texts exclusive of emotional words and taught as an ordinary English writing class China. The result of the study revealed that students in the experimental group scored significantly higher than those in the control group and writing in the post-tests. They concluded that there was a relatively strong positive relationship between EI and writing achievement as Sadeghi and Farzizadeh (2014) stated before.

While the researchers mentioned above study on the EI and writing skill, Afshar and Rahimi (2013) studied on the EI and speaking skill. They investigated the relationship among critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and speaking abilities of Iranian EFL learners. The learners filled out the Bar-On emotional intelligence questionnaire, took the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) form B, and had an interview. The results of the study showed that emotional intelligence, followed by critical thinking, correlated with speaking abilities, all components of emotional intelligence correlated significantly with speaking abilities and there was a significant positive relationship between critical thinking and emotional intelligence.

Bora (2012) studied the relation between Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and students' perceptions towards speaking classes. For the study, two questionnaires were given to the participants in order to see their EQ levels and understand their views on Brain-based speaking activities. The results demonstrated that students with high level of EQ were more eager to attend speaking classes and brain-based activities. However, the ones with low level of EQ did not have healthy relations with the society or confide in themselves, thus being isolated from the classroom atmosphere.

Ghabanchi and Rastegar (2014) studied the impact of both IQ and emotional intelligence on reading comprehension in Iran. Bar-On's emotional intelligence inventory (EQ-i), Raven's Advanced Progressive Matrices, and the reading comprehension portion of the TOEFL (2005) tests were administered. The results showed that the relationship between IQ and reading comprehension was stronger than the relationship between total emotional intelligence and reading comprehension. A small correlation was found between reading comprehension scores and some emotional-intelligence subscales as interpersonal abilities, intrapersonal abilities, and stress management. The study also revealed that IQ was a more determinative factor in reading-comprehension proficiency than emotional intelligence.

Zarezadeh (2014) claimed that emotional intelligence affected English language learning. His study investigated the function of the emotional intelligence in learning English and found out that a significant correlation between subjects' achievement and Stress Management, Adaptability, reading skills and Stress management, General Mood and Adaptability, speaking skill and Emotional Intelligence Quotient and Intrapersonal Intelligence

and Stress Management. The emotional intelligence seemed to play an effective role in the speaking skill. The findings of the study also showed that a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and reading skills and a correlation between the listening skill and Intrapersonal Intelligence.

Research Questions

Although there is much research on several aspects of emotional intelligence as mentioned above, a limited amount of research exists about the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and language skills especially productive language skills. Thus, this study seeks to shed light on the relationship between emotional intelligence and success in foreign language learning especially in writing and speaking skills. In fact, the study aims to answer the following questions:

The present study aims to find out the answers of the following questions:

1. Do the emotional intelligence (EQ) skills vary according to age and gender?
2. Are there any effects of emotional intelligence skills on students' productive language skills (e.g. speaking and writing)?

METHOD

The overall design of the present study is based on the quantitative research method and it is designed to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence skills and productive language skills (e.g. speaking and writing) at a state university in Turkey in addition to investigating emotional intelligence in relation to gender and age.

Participants

The participants in the study include 320 students, of whom 166 (51.9%) are females and 153 (47.8%) are males. They are all freshmen aged from 17-29. In the university where the research was performed English preparatory education is compulsory for the students of Medical Faculty, departments of English teacher training programs (ELT & ELL), electrical and electronics engineering and physical education for the disabled whereas it is optional for the rest of the students from other faculties (e.g. Faculty of Administration, Faculty of Science and Letters, Faculty of Pharmacy and Faculty of Engineering. In the school, all the students were spread over 20 different classes where they are offered an intensive English learning program during a preparatory year.

Research Instruments

To find out the answers for the research questions, the quantitative data which were collected through a demographic inventory and the Turkish Adaptation of Emotional Intelligence Quotient Inventory (Acar, 2001) were used. Firstly, the students filled in the Demographic Inventory. Then, they were given the Turkish adaptations of the Bar-On EQ-I (Acar, 2001) involving the questions of three sub-dimensions as intrapersonal EQ, interpersonal EQ and stress management EQ. The Emotional Quotient Inventory was originally designed in 1980 by Bar-On with the aim of providing an approximate judgment for the individual's emotional intelligence for individuals who are sixteen and above, and it is a self-report scale comprising 133 items. However, in the present study Turkish adaptation of the Bar-On EQ-I consisting of 88 items was used. The items in the questionnaire measure five main areas of competencies or skills in addition to 15 factorial components. The first is intrapersonal EQ and it comprises 40 items. It is divided into 5 items in itself; emotional self-awareness, which

comprises 8 items, assertiveness, which comprises 7 items, self-regard, which comprises 9 items, self-actualization, which comprises 9 items, and independence, which comprises 7 items. The second is interpersonal EQ and it comprises 29 items. It is divided into empathy comprising 8 items, interpersonal relationship comprising 11 items, and social responsibility comprising 10 items. The third is adaptability EQ and it comprises 26 items. These items are divided into problem solving that comprises 8 items, reality testing comprises 10 items, and flexibility comprises 8 items. The fourth is stress management EQ and it comprises 18 items. They are divided into stress tolerance comprising 9 items and impulse control comprising 9 items. The fifth is general mood EQ and it comprises 17 items. They are divided into happiness, which comprises 9 items, and optimism, which comprises 8 items (Bar-On, 1997, pp. 43–45). In the questionnaire there are 15 questions connected to scales which aim to measure response validity.

Validity and Reliability

Before analyzing the questionnaire, SPSS reliability analysis was conducted in order to check the reliability of the items in the questionnaires. Cronbach Alpha Analysis was calculated to find the reliability coefficients of the questionnaires. As Cronbach's alpha values of above 0,60 are considered reliable and ones above 0,80 are considered highly reliable, this analysis showed that the results of these items were reliable. As seen in Table 1, it was discovered that the coefficient of intrapersonal scale is 0.873, interpersonal scale is 0.841, stress management is 0.626, adaptability is 0.640, and general mood is 0.719.

Table 1: Reliability Analyses of the Questionnaires

SUBSCALES	CRONBACH ALPHA	NUMBER OF ITEMS
Intrapersonal	0.873	29
Interpersonal	0.841	18
Stress Management	0.626	13
Adaptability	0.640	15
General Mood	0.719	12

Data Analysis

The data gathered through these questionnaires were analyzed through descriptive statistics by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0, the results of which were illustrated through frequency distribution tables. The statistical significance level was used as $\alpha < .05$ for all the independent sample findings.

FINDINGS

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) skills in terms of age and gender

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted on the data to find out whether there was any significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence skills and age. The results are shown in Table 2. As it is seen in the table, age is not an important factor on any of the sub-dimensions of Emotional Intelligence skills scale except problem-solving capacity. However, the relationship between problem-solving and age is quite weak and inverse which claims that as the learners get older their capacity of problem-solving skill raises.

Table 2: Pearson Correlations on identifying students' EQ skills in reference to age

	N	Mean	SD	P*	R
Self-regard	301	2.60	0.78	0.13	-0.86
Emotional self-awareness	295	2.73	0.61	0.24	-0.06
Assertiveness	296	2.70	0.76	0.65	0.02
Independence	303	2.91	0.69	0.99	0.00
Self-actualization	293	2.67	0.83	0.57	-0.03
Empathy	299	2.76	0.64	0.71	-0.02
Social responsibility	309	2.57	0.80	0.22	-0.07
Interpersonal relationship	295	2.59	0.77	0.94	0.00
Stress tolerance	288	2.95	0.61	0.19	-0.07
Impulsive control	303	3.08	0.69	0.61	0.29
Reality Testing	304	2.84	0.61	0.20	0.07
Flexibility	296	3.00	0.59	0.44	-0.04
Problem-solving	311	2.54	0.79	0.06*	-0.10
Optimism	300	2.56	0.77	0.19	-0.07
Happiness	304	2.71	0.60	0.54	-0.03
INTRAPERSONAL	249	2.69	0.59	0.45	-0.04
INTERPERSONAL	274	2.61	0.65	0.36	-0.05
STRESS MANAGEMENT	276	3.01	0.53	0.56	-0.03
ADAPTABILITY	280	2.79	0.45	0.29	-0.06
GENERAL MOOD	288	2.64	0.60	0.31	-0.05

An independent sample t-test was conducted on the data to find out whether there was any significant difference between male and female students in terms of their emotional intelligence skills and the results are shown in Table 3. As can be seen in the table, the only significant relationship between the EQ skills and gender is optimism and there is not a significant difference between the other EQ skill scores of male and female students. As can be seen in the Table (3), males are more optimistic than females. However, when looked at the mean scores, it is clear that female and male students have varying degrees of scores in EQ skills scale and its subscales.

Table 3: The results of t-tests on identifying students' EQ skills in reference to gender

	GENDER	N	MEAN	SD	T	P*
Self-regard	Female	154	2.64	0.75	0.04	0.96
	Male	146	2.60	0.81	0.04	
Emotional self-awareness	Female	153	2.77	0.59	0.91	0.36
	Male	141	2.70	0.63	0.90	
Assertiveness	Female	157	2.72	0.70	0.63	0.52
	Male	138	2.67	0.81	0.62	
Independence	Female	161	2.96	0.68	0.00	0.99
	Male	141	2.91	0.69	0.00	
Self-actualization	Female	154	2.68	0.77	0.19	0.84
	Male	138	2.66	0.90	0.19	
Empathy	Female	155	2.78	0.61	0.64	0.51
	Male	143	2.73	0.68	0.64	
Social responsibility	Female	163	2.62	0.74	1.15	0.24
	Male	145	2.51	0.86	1.14	
Interpersonal relationship	Female	157	2.64	0.72	1.17	0.24
	Male	137	2.53	0.83	1.15	
Stress tolerance	Female	154	2.92	0.58	-1.05	0.29
	Male	134	3.00	0.63	-1.04	
Impulsive control	Female	155	3.06	0.67	-0.523	0.60
	Male	147	3.10	0.72	-0.522	
Reality Testing	Female	158	2.84	0.63	0.46	0.91
	Male	145	2.82	0.60		
Flexibility	Female	156	2.95	0.53	0.33	0.12
	Male	139	3.06	0.64		
Problem-solving	Female	159	2.49	0.73	0.13	0.38
	Male	151	2.57	0.85		
Optimism	Female	155	2.49	0.71	-1.72	0.08*
	Male	144	2.64	0.82		
Happiness	Female	159	2.74	0.57	0.74	0.45
	Male	144	2.68	0.63		
INTRAPERSONAL	Female	135	2.72	0.56	0.99	0.31
	Male	113	2.64	0.64	0.98	
INTERPERSONAL	Female	149	2.66	0.59	1.28	0.20

	Male	124	2.56	0.72	1.62	
STRESS MANAGEMENT	Female	145	2.97	0.51	-1.21	0.22
	Male	131	3.05	0.55	-1.21	
ADAPTABILITY	Female	147	2.75	0.41	-1.310	0.19
	Male	132	2.82	0.49		
GENERAL MOOD	Female	151	2.62	0.56	-1.298	0.54
	Male	136	2.66	0.65		

Moreover, in terms of all components of “intrapersonal EQ” skill such as self regard, emotional self awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self actualization, the mean value of the females is higher than males. Likewise, all the components of “interpersonal EQ” skills such as empathy, interpersonal relationship, and social responsibility, the mean value of the females is higher than males. However, considering all components of “stress management EQ” skill such as stress tolerance and impulsive control, the mean value of the males is higher than females. It can be said that although the difference between males and females is not statistically significant, males seem to be more successful at tolerating stressful situations whereas they seem to be less emphatic, less socially responsible, and have less intrapersonal and interpersonal emotional skills than females.

The relationship between emotional intelligence skills and students’ productive language skills (writing and speaking)

To evaluate students’ academic achievement in speaking and writing skills, the grades that students got from those two courses during their preparation year were used. The students were classified as successful and unsuccessful according to their scores which are gathered throughout a whole year not based on one single assessment. Independent samples T-tests were applied to show the differences in the groups. The results of the analyses are shown in table 4.

Table 4: The results of t-tests on identifying students’ EQ skills in reference to “Writing”

		N	MEAN	SD	T	P
Self-regard	Successful	166	2.65	0.77	1.25	0.21
	Unsuccessful	134	2.54	0.80		
Emotional self-awareness	Successful	163	2.75	0.57	0.52	0.60
	Unsuccessful	131	2.71	0.66		
Assertiveness	Successful	165	2.74	0.76	1.23	0.21
	Unsuccessful	130	2.63	0.74		
Independence	Successful	169	2.88	0.70	-0.99	0.32
	Unsuccessful	133	2.95	0.66		
Self-actualization	Successful	165	2.68	0.82	0.25	0.80
	Unsuccessful	127	2.66	0.85		
Empathy	Successful	164	2.76	0.64	0.17	0.85
	Unsuccessful	134	2.75	0.66		
Social responsibility	Successful	172	2.53	0.79	-1.05	0.29
	Unsuccessful	136	2.62	0.82		
Interpersonal relationship	Successful	167	2.57	0.76	-0.43	0.66
	Unsuccessful	127	2.61	0.79		
Stress tolerance	Successful	158	3.01	0.57	1.74	0.08*
	Unsuccessful	129	2.88	0.65		
Impulsive control	Successful	165	3.19	0.66	-0.31	0.07*
	Unsuccessful	137	3.07	0.73		
Reality Testing	Successful	168	2.84	0.58	0.06	0.94
	Unsuccessful	135	2.83	0.66		
Flexibility	Successful	163	3.02	0.61	0.50	0.61
	Unsuccessful	132	2.98	0.57		
Problem-solving	Successful	173	2.57	0.78	0.83	0.40
	Unsuccessful	137	2.49	0.82		
Optimism	Successful	167	2.62	0.76	1.41	0.15
	Unsuccessful	132	2.49	0.78		
Happiness	Successful	168	2.68	0.58	-1.26	0.20
	Unsuccessful	135	2.77	0.61		
INTRAPERSONAL	Successful	139	2.72	0.58	1.05	0.29
	Unsuccessful	109	2.64	0.61		
INTERPERSONAL	Successful	153	2.60	0.65	-0.38	0.70

	Unsuccessful	120	2.63	0.66		
STRESS MANAGEMENT	Successful	150	3.04	0.49	1.07	0.28
	Unsuccessful	125	2.97	0.57		
ADAPTABILITY	Successful	154	2.82	0.41	1.15	0.25
	Unsuccessful	125	2.75	0.50		
GENERAL MOOD	Successful	160	2.64	0.59	-1.73	0.86
	Unsuccessful	127	2.65	0.61		

According to the results of the t-tests, students' success in writing is not significantly related to their total intrapersonal, interpersonal and stress management scores as well as the components of intrapersonal and interpersonal (self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, self-actualization, empathy, interpersonal relationship, and social responsibility). However, the relationship between students' writing achievement and the components of stress management, namely stress tolerance and impulse control. This shows that students who are good at impulse control and stress tolerance are also successful in writing skills in English (Table 4).

As for the relationship between speaking achievement and EQ skills total scores of the three subscales (intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management) and their components, the results are seen in Table 5. As can be seen in the table, the relationship between speaking achievement and "interpersonal and stress management" EQ subscales is statistically significant. Furthermore, the relationship between independence as one of the components of intrapersonal EQ skills; social responsibility as one of the components of interpersonal EQ skills and stress tolerance as one of the stress management EQ skills and students' achievement in speaking skill is statistically significant (Table 5).

Table 5: The results of t-tests on identifying students' EQ skills in reference to "Speaking"

		N	MEAN	SD	T	P
Self-regard	Successful	174	2.60	0.72	-0.05	0.95
	Unsuccessful	124	2.61	0.87		
Emotional self-awareness	Successful	170	2.76	0.54	.080	0.42
	Unsuccessful	121	2.70	0.70		
Assertiveness	Successful	170	2.70	0.71	0.13	0.89
	Unsuccessful	122	2.69	0.82		
Independence	Successful	175	2.99	0.66	-1.36	0.07*
	Unsuccessful	124	2.67	0.70		
Self-actualization	Successful	166	2.68	0.78	0.04	0.96
	Unsuccessful	123	2.67	0.91		
Empathy	Successful	173	2.82	0.64	-1.01	0.20
	Unsuccessful	123	2.72	0.63		
Social responsibility	Successful	180	2.64	0.76	-0.85	0.09*
	Unsuccessful	125	2.51	0.85		
Interpersonal relationship	Successful	172	2.58	0.75	-0.05	0.95
	Unsuccessful	119	2.59	0.81		
Stress tolerance	Successful	163	3.03	0.55	2.38	0.01*
	Unsuccessful	121	2.85	0.67		
Impulsive control	Successful	176	3.09	0.63	0.23	0.81
	Unsuccessful	123	3.07	0.79		
Reality Testing	Successful	174	2.87	0.58	1.35	0.17
	Unsuccessful	126	2.77	0.65		
Flexibility	Successful	170	3.00	0.57	0.83	0.93
	Unsuccessful	122	3.00	0.62		
Problem-solving	Successful	180	2.57	0.76	0.80	0.42
	Unsuccessful	127	2.49	0.83		
Optimism	Successful	172	2.60	0.72	0.94	0.34
	Unsuccessful	125	2.51	0.84		
Happiness	Successful	173	2.70	0.59	-0.55	0.57
	Unsuccessful	127	2.74	0.62		
INTRAPERSONAL	Successful	143	2.70	0.54	0.46	0.64
	Unsuccessful	103	2.67	0.66		
INTERPERSONAL	Successful	161	2.71	0.61	-0.51	0.05*

	Unsuccessful	110	2.56	0.70		
STRESS MANAGEMENT	Successful	157	3.10	0.47	1.46	0.01*
	Unsuccessful	115	2.95	0.60		
ADAPTABILITY	Successful	159	2.81	0.42	1.17	0.24
	Unsuccessful	117	2.74	0.49		
GENERAL MOOD	Successful	164	2.64	0.58	0.03	0.97
	Unsuccessful	121	2.64	0.64		

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study, firstly, examined the relationship between emotional intelligence skills and two variables: gender and age. Secondly, it examined the relationship between emotional intelligence skills and productive language skills; writing and speaking. The emotional intelligence skills that are investigated in relation to these variables are the Intrapersonal EQ involving emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization and independence; Interpersonal EQ involving empathy, interpersonal relationship and social responsibility; Adaptability EQ involving problem solving, reality testing and flexibility; Stress management EQ involving stress tolerance and impulse control; General Mood EQ involving happiness and optimism. Regarding the results, it can be concluded that age is only related to problem solving component skill that is one of the components of adaptability EQ whereas gender is only related to optimism that is the component of general mood EQ. Moreover, descriptive statistics indicated that women can empathize better than men; are more socially responsible, are more aware of their feelings, show more levels of self-regard, have higher levels of independence and self-actualization whereas males are better at tolerating stress and controlling their feelings. Finally, the study revealed that stress tolerance and impulse control as the components of stress management EQ are effective on students' writing achievement whereas "interpersonal and stress management" EQ subscales; independence as one of the components of intrapersonal EQ skills; social responsibility as one of the components of interpersonal EQ skills and stress tolerance as one of the stress management EQ skills are effective on students' achievement in speaking skill.

However, the relationship between problem-solving and age is quite weak and inverse which claims that as the learners get older their capacity of problem-solving skill raises. Problem solving skill is a component of adaptability sub-dimension of EI and it is also among important life skills. Although the correlation is not strong, it seems that as the students get older they become more emotionally intelligent in this respect. Bar-On, (1997) suggests that people who are good at problem solving can immediately notice problems and try to find solutions instead of staying away from them. Before solving the problem, they first collect the necessary information and act accordingly. This result is also partly in accordance with the thesis that emotional intelligence or at least some parts of it can be learnt and improved in life at any time and any age but it requires time and commitment (Goleman, 1996; Fariselli, Ghini, Freedman, 2006). As a component of emotional intelligence, problem solving skill seems to have improved as students got older. This may stem from the experience acquired in life and raised self awareness.

In terms of gender, this study did not seem to be consistent with lots of studies in the literature (King, 1999; Sutarso, 1999; Wing and Love, 2001; Singh, 2002; Katyal & Awasthi, 2005; Ahmad, Bangash & Khan, 2009; Das & Sahu, 2015) that suggest differences in the

components of emotional intelligence levels of men and women since males and female did not differ significantly except optimism. But this study also confirmed the results of some previous studies indicating that men are more optimistic than women (Goleman, 1998). Contrary to the common judgment that women are more aware of their emotions than men especially in western cultures, as recommended by Goleman (1998), this study indicated that they do not differ in their emotional awareness levels. This may be explained by the changes in socializing approaches of the societies towards two genders and the tendency toward more equal treatment as recommended by Crespi (2003). It may also be assumed that gender is not a great divider in terms of emotional intelligence.

Stress tolerance and impulse control are similar things; in that, both of them have the components of being able to cope with difficult situations in a calm, non-aggressive, patient manner. As a consequence, when the findings related to the students' achievement in writing are considered (Bar-On & Handley, 1999) it can be said that students keeping their temper under stressful situations and believing in the power of them to overcome the difficulties are better language learners in terms of writing skills. In the previous literature, there are some other studies indicating a relationship between stress management EQ and writing skills (Pishghadam, 2009). In conclusion, to be a good writer seems to require one to acquire stress management competencies well. In other words, as confirmed by Karimi (2011), understanding and managing their own emotions and being aware of and responsive to others' emotions would contribute to the L2 productive skills, particularly writing, as well as motivation and self-actualization of both university professors of L2 writing and their students.

In other respects, speaking in the target language can be defined as the most stressful situation for nearly all of the foreign language learners and they are usually reported to experience stress and tension (Young, 1991). In this respect, it can be thought that the more emotionally intelligent person may get rid of those problems easily and enhance language performance and a relaxing and healthy classroom atmosphere which enables students to get relaxed is needed to promote speaking skills of the students. Besides, considering the socio-cultural theory of language acquisition, in order to produce language output a learner has to interact with other people (Ellis, 1997). So, the findings of the study can best be explained with this approach. Taking all these account it must be noted that the nature of speaking skill is such that interpersonal competencies, intrapersonal competencies, general mood and stress management seem to be contributory. (Pishghadam, 2009). Bar-On & Handley (1999), indicated that independence is said to be related to the ability not to be emotionally dependent but to be self-controlled. Furthermore, people having high level of independence may experience high self-confidence and are better at taking risky actions. Likewise, social responsibility is described as a person who is helpful, good at cooperation and acting responsibly in a social group. It also has to do with the ability to socialize with others by taking social rules into consideration. People having a high sense of social responsibility are not self-oriented and they have a feeling of trust on others. Considering the description of the people having those features it can be concluded that they are all helpful and facilitating for the students to interact with others and communicate easily.

The implications of the findings may encourage teachers to focus on the activities enhancing emotional intelligence which will lead the students to academic greatness. Thus, teachers may help learners foster the skills in writing and speaking. According to the researchers of emotional intelligence (Goleman, Mayer and Salovey, Bar-on) while IQ is congenital, Emotional Intelligence can be taught and improved. Thus, it may be suggested that Emotional Intelligence should be taught at schools, to bring up more successful individuals.

A more detailed study is needed to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and language skills. Moreover, in the current study, the effect of emotional

intelligence was on foreign language learning, further studies are recommended to investigate the effect of emotional intelligence on foreign language teaching.

One limitation of this study is that since this study was conducted with the language learners in one university, it is not acceptable to generalize the findings of this study across the whole country and university students. Another limitation of the present study is that it is based on the academic achievement of students at the university. Moreover, since this study was conducted in an EFL situation, it can be recommended to replicate it different learning contexts.

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