

The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Verbal Intelligence in Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract – The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' verbal intelligence and their emotional intelligence in learning English. To do so, 120 Iranian EFL learners participated in this study. The participants were asked to answer the emotional quotient and multiple intelligence questionnaires. The results of Pearson correlation showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' verbal intelligences and their emotional intelligence.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, multiple intelligence, verbal intelligence

I. INTRODUCTION

It has been constantly observed in previous studies of second language acquisition that some learners perform better than the others in a second or foreign language context. Individual differences can be one of the potential reasons for learners' different behaviors in language learning context. Crozier (1997) claims individual differences may lead to academic success or failure in the area of foreign or second language learning. As a result, it can be inferred that learners' success or failure is partly due to factors such as aptitude and intelligence, personality, motivation, and learning strategy use.

Individual differences add to our ability to predict scores on tests of academic achievement and confirm that personality factors are as important as intelligence for educational achievement. The idea that language learning varies with personality traits may suggest that some of these traits are beneficial for learners (Strong, 1983, as cited in Kezwer, 1987). Crozier (1997) cites some important personality traits with regard to the individual differences among learners: intelligence, anxiety, motivation, self-confidence, shyness, aggressiveness.

Intelligence is the "capacity for learning, reasoning, and understanding" (Webster's American Dictionary, 1998, p. 426). Gardner (1999) stated that humans have different types of intelligences or intellectual strengths and that each one of them develops in its own developmental path. He believes that intelligences involve processes to perform certain kinds of information that is a potential of our species. Some of the processes may specifically be done by an individual. Gardner (1999) proposed seven forms of intelligences. They are (1) linguistic, (2) musical, (3) logical-mathematical, (4) visual-spatial, (5) bodily-kinesthetic, (6) interpersonal, and (7) intrapersonal. Although originally started as seven intelligences, an eighth intelligence "naturalistic intelligence" has been added to the list later.

Until recently, intelligence was scarcely found in language teaching studies and this concept was not valued by scholars, since they believed that it lacked scientific validity (Akbari & Hosseini, 2008). In recent decades, a lot of researchers had investigated these aspects such as logical reasoning, spatial skills, math skills, understanding analogies, verbal skills, etc. For example, Terman (1921, cited in Sternberg 1997, p. 339) states that “an individual is intelligent in proportion as he is able to carry on abstract thinking”. Although Intelligence Quotient (IQ) could predict to some degree academic, professional and personal success, but there were some people with high IQ scores who were poorly doing in their life and losing their chances of success. Gardner (1983) and Sternberg (1985) argue that IQ tests measure only a very narrow aspect of human intelligence performance, they think there is more than one general type of intelligence and there are different types of intelligence contributing to the issue of measuring human’s abilities. The multiple intelligence theory indicates that people with similar IQ level perform differently in their lives. Gardner (1983) emphasize that not only intelligence is an innate entity, but also it can be developed, so he expanded the notion of intelligence to cover some areas such as music, social relations, and intrapersonal knowledge in addition to linguistic and mathematical abilities.

In his multiple intelligence theory, Gardner (1983) tries to broaden the scope of human potential beyond the confines of IQ scores. He seriously questions the validity of determining an individual's intelligence through the practice of taking a person out of his natural learning environment and asking him to do isolated tasks he would never done before and probably would never choose to do again. In a sharp contrast with the current theories of intelligence, Gardner (1983) suggests that intelligence has more to do with the capacity for solving problems and fashioning products in a context-rich and naturalist setting.

In the 1990s, the emotional intelligence was introduced, for the first time, was used in many fields including education. This concept was formally developed out of growing emphasis on research on the interaction of emotion and thought in the field of psychology. Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as “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, which include self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself”. Later, Goleman (1998) reformulated his first definition of emotional intelligence and broke down emotional intelligence into twenty-five different emotional competencies, like political awareness, service orientation, self-confidence, consciousness and achievement drive. Furthermore, Mayer and Salovey (1990) define the emotional intelligence as “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 thinking and actions”.

Knight and Sparrow (2006) believe that emotions now appear to be based in biochemical reactions that occur throughout the body and have been found in the heart and in the immune system as well as throughout the central nervous system. In other words, when there is something wrong or when our needs are not getting met, our emotions signal to us. There are social, mental and even physical consequences to our ability to deal with our emotions.

Shumin (2002) discusses that adults are more concerned than children about how they may be judged by others, so both sides should take care of each other's emotions. He suggests that language instructors provide learners with opportunities for meaningful communicative behavior about relevant topics by using learner-learner interaction as the key to teaching language for communication. Furthermore, success in language learning depends on the confidence of the learner; this confidence has a profound impact on the future personal and intellectual success of all of students.

Fahim and Pishghadam (2007) explored the relationship between EQ, IQ, and verbal intelligence with the academic achievement of students majoring in English language. They found that academic achievement was strongly linked with emotional intelligence competencies. Motallebzadeh (2009) found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and EFL learners' reading comprehension and structural ability.

Hasanzadeh and Shahmohamadi (2011) have reported a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and its predictive power in Iranian foreign language learners' language achievement. Hashemi and Ghanizadeh (2011) found positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy beliefs. Rouhani (2008) found a positive effect of cognitive-affective reading- based course on empathy, and a negative effect on anxiety.

Iranian EFL teachers do not consider factors for empowering the emotions of the students and there is no attention to students' different multiple intelligences. If teachers respect learners' ability, multiple intelligence, they can empower their learners' emotions by paying more attention to their intelligence. It seems that it is necessary to develop an investigation to fill the above-mentioned gaps. So the present study will be an attempt to measure the relationship between emotional intelligence and Iranian EFL learners' verbal intelligence in English language learning.

To meet the aforementioned purposes, the following research question is proposed:

- Is there any relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' verbal intelligence and their emotional intelligence in learning English?

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The participants of this study were selected among the intermediate level learners of English language institutes in Tabriz. One hundred and twenty Iranian EFL learners participated in this study. The participants were male and female whose age range was between 18 and 32. They speak Persian and Azeri as their native language. Prior to the study, the participants were briefly instructed about the constructs of the questionnaires.

B. Instruments

In this study two questionnaires were used for data collection.

The Multiple Intelligences Developmental Assessment Scales (MIDAS). It was developed by Branton Shearer (1996) and endorsed by Howard Gardner (1983) and it was a highly reliable instrument for measuring the indexes of multiple intelligences. MIDAS was completed by the person or other individuals such as parents or teachers who have enough information about the person (Shearer, 1996). It consists of 119 Likert-type items. The participants were asked to read each item and select what they perceive as the best answer at that point in time in their life. There was no right or wrong responses and the respondents were asked to select the option which best describes their characteristics. The goal is to provide a reasonable estimate of the person's multiple intelligence disposition in order to promote personal satisfaction, academic and career success through enhanced self-awareness and differentiated instructional support.

The MIDAS were developed in 1987 to assess the multiple intelligences for adolescents and adults. The MIDAS inquires about developed skill and levels of participation and enthusiasm for a wide variety of activities in daily life.

Emotional Quotient inventory (EQ-i). The Emotional Quotient inventory (EQ-i), developed by Bar-On (1997) model of EI was used in this study. This scale assesses EI based on self-report response to 133 items tapping the evaluation and expression of emotion in oneself and others, and the use of emotions in solving problems. The Persian version of this instrument was employed to avoid cross-cultural differences and probable misunderstanding regarding the content of questionnaire.

The Bar-On emotional quotient inventory (EQ-i) is the most comprehensive self-report measure of EQ. It consists of 15 subscales, which include emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, independence, empathy, interpersonal relationship, social responsibility, problem solving, reality testing, flexibility, stress tolerance and impulse control. In addition to the subscales, the EQ-i contains three factors that are considered facilitator of emotional intelligence which include happiness, optimism, and self-actualization. The EQ-i yields a measure of overall emotional intelligence as well as scores on each of the sub-factors. Participants were asked to respond to the items by indicating their degree of agreement with each of the 133 statements using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Some of the questions in this questionnaire were negatively worded to examine students' attention to the questionnaire, and they were scored reversely. The researcher measured the extent to which people are responding randomly or distorting their responses to appear favorably or unfavorably to the person administering the test.

C. Procedure

The study began by distributing the EQ questionnaire among EFL students. Then, MIDAS was given to the participants. Primarily, the purpose of the study was introduced to the participants and they were told that their truthfulness in filling out the questionnaires was so important for the results of the study; therefore, they were asked to be honest. Participants

were given 90 minutes to answer. Instructions were provided as to how they were supposed to respond to the questions.

III. RESULTS

The details of learners' performance on different dimensions of MIDAS, according to the most favored to the least favored dimensions, are presented in the form of descriptive statistics in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of MIDAS

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Interpersonal	120	21452.0	78.5788	24.73407
Intrapersonal	120	12304.0	44.9048	6.55057
Verbal	120	16007.0	58.6337	25.58919
Math/Logic	120	9187.00	33.6520	7.16198
Music	120	9140.00	33.4799	8.01243
Spatial	120	7927.00	29.0366	4.27184
Linguistics	120	7386.00	27.0549	5.14073

In order to address the research question of study in finding whether there is any relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' verbal intelligence and their emotional intelligence in learning English, a Pearson correlation was performed. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation between Self-efficacy and interpersonal

		Verbal	Emotional Intelligence
Verbal	Pearson Correlation	1	.739**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	.739**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of Pearson correlation indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship ($r = .73$, $p < .05$) between Iranian EFL learners' verbal intelligence and their emotional intelligence. Thus, the research question of study was verified. Figure 1 shows the scatterplot of the relationship between EFL learners' verbal intelligence and their emotional intelligence.

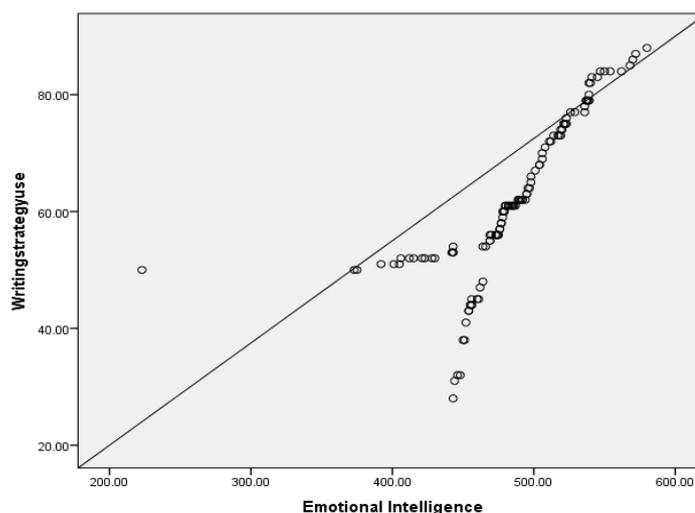


Figure 1: The scatterplot of the relationship between verbal intelligence and emotional intelligence

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study revealed that there is a significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' verbal intelligence and emotional intelligence. The findings of this study supported those of Fahim and Pishghadam (2007) who found a significant relationship between EQ, IQ, and verbal intelligence with the academic achievement of students majoring in English language. The findings of the present study are in line with those of Motallebzadeh (2009) who found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and EFL learners' reading comprehension and structural ability. The findings of this study are also able to support those of Hasanzadeh and Shahmohamadi (2011) who showed a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and its predictive power in Iranian foreign language learners' language achievement. The results of the present study corroborate those of Hashemi and Ghanizadeh (2011) who found positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy beliefs. Rouhani (2008) found a positive effect of cognitive- affective reading- based course on empathy, and a negative effect on anxiety.

To sum up, this study has made a significant contribution to the knowledge base in Iranian EFL learners' verbal intelligence and emotional intelligence. Increasing EFL learners' emotional intelligence leads to promote their use of writing strategies during oral communications. The learners who are emotionally involved in writing tend to use more social and cognitive writing strategies that eventually lead them to overcome their writing barriers. The findings of this study necessitate EFL syllabus designers and material developers to include more emotional factors in language learning materials. Listening to songs, oral discussions, and emotional surveys are among useful techniques to raise learners' emotional competencies.

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