



## **Emotional Intelligence Enhancement Impacts on Developing Speaking Skill among EFL Learners: an Empirical Study**

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Affective factors play a role in learning in general and language learning in particular. The current study tried to empirically examine the influence of one of these factors namely 'Emotional Intelligence' to check its influence on Speaking Skill. Participants were Intermediate level students who took the IELTS test (International English Language Testing System), so that the researchers could evaluate their proficiency in speaking skill at the beginning of the project. Next, the Emotional Intelligence of them was calculated and afterwards Emotional Intelligence (EI) was taught. After a one-educational-year course of simultaneously teaching EI and Speaking skill, the same IELTS along with the Emotional Quotient (EQ) questionnaire was administered in experimental and control group. To observe the development in each category, the difference in scores of both EQ and IELTS test (pre-test and post-test) were calculated. Ultimately, it was found that both EQ and speaking skill of the learners in treatment group were developed in a significant way whereas only speaking skill of control group progressed but it was not significant. The findings of the study can contribute in the promotion of the knowledge on the effect of EI in language learning.

**Keywords:** EFL learners, emotional intelligence, emotional intelligence development, speaking skill

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## INTRODUCTION

It goes without saying that learning in general and language learning in particular depend on many factors, including the mind and more narrowly the efficiency quotient of the mind which is generally discussed under the concept of intelligence. The emergence of *Psycholinguistics* and *neurolinguistics* shows that language and brain are not totally irrelevant. The relationship between the mind and language learning seems to be well supported with theoretical reasoning. *Behaviorism* (dominant in 1960s-1970s) almost excluded the role of mind in learning and conceived of almost no difference between animal learning and human learning. Approaches based on this movement presumed that whatever is (positively) reinforced would be repeated. Other major movements like *Cognitivist Approach* to learning put emphasis on various internal processes, and the individual is counted as the sole channel through which knowledge is gained. What this movement holds could be consequently applied to language learning as it is a kind of learning. Through later developments and in recent theories like sociocultural theories of learning, the necessity of language becomes more prominent.

Donato (2000) suggested that Sociocultural Theory regards learning as a semiotic process where involvement in socially-mediated activities is essential. In this scope it goes without saying that language is also an indispensable means of social interactions. This mediation turns into the means for mediating the mental functioning inside an individual. Vygotsky hypothesized a theory of human development that not only draws on notions of race and heredity but it lies also on the belief that being immersed in social and cultural processes develops human psychology; development of cognitive functions in children, such as higher order reasoning is solely feasible through practical activity in a social environment. Classrooms are social spaces in which learners learn through engagement with practical activity in collaboration. In his ZPD concept ability to function linguistically in ways that promote thinking and learning is also claimed to happen.

Vygotsky's ideas have been extensively applied in the education. The implications of these ideas in the field of L2 teaching therefore, are well founded and can be summarized as follow: In the process approaches, the traces of Vygotsky's ideas can be seen, which appeared as a reaction against the dominant product approaches in the 1960s and 1970s. The product approaches on the other hand, are based on behaviorism and view language teaching to linguistic form, discrete linguistics skills along with habit formation. They observe language consisting of parts that are learned distinctly, an example of these approaches is the audio-lingual approach. On the contrary, cognitive aspects are emphasized in process based approaches, acknowledging the contributions that the learner brings to the learning context. Students are taught what Horowitz (1986) named 'systematic thinking skills'. An important part of L2 classroom literature is the social aspect of teaching L2. According to Lantolf (2000) a basic concept in sociocultural theory is mediation in human mind and the concept of 'tools' in coming to know the world and their own "individual". He further states that Vygotsky supports acting on the physical world without the intermediary of tools. Whether symbolic or signs, tools according to Vygotsky are artifacts created by humans under specific

cultural (culture specific) and historical conditions, and as such they carry with them the characteristics of the culture in question.

Every step in learning a second language could be difficult for some learners and relatively easy for some others; such a difference in language learning is called 'language aptitude differences' as Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) defined it. But what exactly underlies aptitude is a very controversial issue in the literature (see Doughty, 2014). Emotional intelligence has increasingly attracted attention both in scientific and nonscientific environments in recent decades. In its present form, EQ was made known in 1990 (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), but as a term it has existed for an almost long time in the literature, for example Greenspan (1989) and Leuner (1966) used it. Tracing back the concept, one can find its roots in Social intelligence. Thorndike (1920) applied the term for the ability to act intelligently and to manage and understand others. First academic users of the term in their articles were Beldoch, (1964) and Leuner (1966); although it is discussed that the first use could be attributed to the dissertation of Payne (1985). In his concepts of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence, Gardner (1983) was a developer who used the term Emotional Intelligence as well.

EQ travelled from academic articles into the lives of the general public by the book 'Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ' (Goleman, 1995). Subsequently, an article was published in the TIME magazine (Gibbs, 1995) and helped the prevalence of the term. A scientific method for calculating emotions was needed to be developed after discovering the importance of EQ, and it was accomplished by Mayer and Salovey (2004). The developers of the method argued that a high EQ indicates the ability to express meanings and handle emotions more successfully and recognize feelings better. They also claim that higher EI individuals tend to be more open and agreeable than others. Decision making is dependent on emotions; language learning is a great decision which embraces many other decisions at the time of language use as decision on whether to learn a language or not and how to learn it or how much to learn. Thus, EQ becomes more worthy of reflection as decisions could be emotional.

The objectives of the current study could be enumerated as empirically examining the influence of EQ enhancement on EFL learners and improving their speaking skill; also, provided that an impact would be discovered, including EQ enhancement programs in the current syllabi would be recommended as a wise choice, yet, there is a need for replicating the study and triangulation to increase the credibility and validity of the results. Thus, the research question and hypothesis could be posed as follows:

**Research Question:** Does EQ enhancement have any impacts on Listening Skill development among EFL learners?

**Research Hypothesis:** Emotional Intelligence Enhancement does not influence Speaking skill.

### **Emotional Intelligence**

EQ has been defined in many different ways by different researchers, but commonalities exist in definitions. Being able to control emotions of one's own and of others, to discriminate between different emotions, label them appropriately and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior is one of the definitions of EQ. It was

defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as the ability to recognize, understand, adjust, and harness emotions. It also includes the ability of enhance thought and understanding of interpersonal dynamics through joining intelligence, empathy and emotions. Terminology and operationalization of Emotional Intelligence however, is controversial. It involves possessing an ability to have effect on thinking and actions based on knowing one's own and others' emotions (Geher, 2004; Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011). Freedman and Jensen (2005) defined it as a person's ability to artfully and consciously select feelings, thoughts, and actions, to obtain ideal outcomes. Olatoye, Akintude, and Yakasi (2010) stated that EQ is a set of competencies and skills which are acquired and predict positive outcomes.

#### **Related Studies on EI and its Influence in Various Fields**

EI, which is increasingly attracting attention, could be listed among the most investigated affective concepts. The centrality of emotions to human life was claimed by Jenkins, Oatley and Stein (1998). It has been found that EI is very influential in successful learning. With the development of humanism, affective factors became the center of attention for educators and concepts like interests, feelings, emotions, confidence, and etc. received more attention (Po-Ying, 2006). For example, Chao (2003) investigated foreign language anxiety to ensure if there is any link between it and EI among EFL private college students in Taiwan. His study on 306 learners proved the existence of a significant link between foreign language anxiety and EI as a whole factor. Thus, it could be argued that emotions are influential on learning a language, as various areas of human life -including achievement and more narrowly language achievement- seem to be dependent on social intelligence, and more specifically on EI. Various researchers (e.g.: Alavinia & Agha Alikhani, 2014; Fahim & Pishghadam, 2007; López, 2011; Pishghadam, 2009) argued that EI plays a crucial role in various areas of language achievement. Although no causal relationships have been shown, studies have proved that people with high EQ have greater job performance (e.g. Gryn, M. 2010), leadership skills (e.g. Cavallo, K. Brienza, D. 2002.) and mental health (e.g. Martins A., Ramalho N., & Morin E. 2010).

Goleman (1995) argued that EQ can -as well as or better than IQ- predict success at school, at home, and at work; moreover, he suggested that successful life outcomes are more a result of emotional rather than cognitive intelligence. It was argued by Cherniss (2000, p. 547) that "a considerable body of research suggests that EQ provides the basis for competencies important in almost any job". Robb and Ciarrochi (2005) examining the relationship between EQ and IQ in a study, found that an executive needs a high IQ for promoting to the high levels of being a management or executive, yet after that accomplishment, no distinguishing role was proved for IQ in the performance of managers, rather EQ becomes the main predictor to differentiate the star managers from the average performers .

#### **Success, Achievement and Learning in Relation with EQ**

Goleman (1995) claimed EI could be as and sometimes more powerful than IQ. Alavinia, Bonyadi, and Razavi (2012) studied motivation to learn an L2 and found that

being successful in it was also positively and significantly correlated with EI. A parallel study by Fahim and Pishghadam (2007) revealed the same results in the relation between EI, skills and academic success. Foreign language learners' general achievement was studied by Shahmohamadi and Hasanzadeh (2011) to check whether there are associations with EI in an Iranian context or not. Subjects were 111 High Intermediate language learners. The researchers administered Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory, but could not find any significant relationship between EI as a whole factor and language achievement; nevertheless, intrapersonal and general mood and some subcomponents (i.e., independence, self-assertion, and optimism) as some of the components of EI were found to be significantly related to language achievement. Also two of the components of EI namely intrapersonal and interpersonal ones predicted language achievement in their study.

Literature on the influences of Emotional Intelligence on various aspects of success in life is rich, yet enough practical steps on how to enhance it have not been taken specifically in Iran. Some researchers (Penrose, Perry, & Ball, 2007) believe that EI can be developed and learners can learn and improve their competence in each of the four branches of EI by the use of the four-branch model of EI developed by Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso (2000). Applying EI constructs to academic and professional-education programs have been the focus of attention for many scholars lately (Abraham, 2006). Imai (2010) found that while interpersonal transaction is the base of learning, facilitating, filtering, or hindering an individual's inner cognitive functioning would be created by emotions.

### **Language Learning and EI**

Language competencies are increasingly important in globalized world and it is no longer an advantage for an academician, a professional, an artist or a job seeker to speak just one language, rather, it could be a drawback to speak only one language. Thus, the current study investigates emotional intelligence as a significant factor in language teaching in the world of language education. Although there is substantial research on EQ in the workplace or on individuals, more attention is needed in education (Hargreaves, 2000; Pekrun and Frese, 1992). "Emotions experienced in the academic domain have until recently remained a largely unexplored field of psychological research, despite burgeoning research interest in the role of affect in psychological development" (Goetz, Franzis P., Reinhard, and Nathan C. 2007, p. 3). Motivation, activation of learning resources, choice of learning strategies (cognitive and metacognitive), and ultimate achievement are all influenced by emotions. Cherniss (2000) argued that it is possible to employ teaching programs which seek the development of EI in different fields, so stress management and conflict resolution, communication and empathy training and management will be improved in his findings through teaching EQ.

Goetz T. et al. (2007, p. 4) argued that "Due to their impact on achievement outcomes, emotions experienced in testing situations are a particularly critical topic of investigation in modern, achievement-oriented societies". Ability to control and develop emotional practices should culminate in emotional states of self-control (Lok & Bishop,

1999). Goetz team also state that we lack knowledge on learners' state emotions which is experienced in academic settings (particularly their emotions during taking tests). To be able to control oneself must be of value in the critical moment of being tested in an academic career.

Language learning is emotionally driven the fact that many SLA researchers (Dörnyei, 2005; Imai, 2010) argued. Foreign language learners are involved in a number of feelings and emotions while learning language. EQ skills improve learning potential of foreign language acquisition, a result which was revealed by the study of Riemer (2003). Also, Meng and Wang (2006) maintained that facilitation and improvement of language learning happens by positive emotions. Cultivating emotions is suggested by López (2011) to provide help for solving demotivation resulted by fear or anger which can put language acquisition at risk, consequently, she claims that self-esteem and empathy are evoked by emotions which significantly contribute to learners' attitudes and motivation and facilitate language learning. MacIntyre (2002, p.45) in the same line of inquiry, argued that emotions "just might be the fundamental basis of motivation, one deserving far greater attention in the language learning domain".

### **EI and Speaking Skill**

Speaking is composed of arranging a number of vocabularies in an orderly manner and it is obvious that proficiency increases if knowledge of vocabulary furthers. Studies (Rostampour & Niroomand, 2013) have been done on the associations between vocabulary knowledge and emotional intelligence of EFL learners in Iranian. A number of other studies (Fahim & Pishghadam, 2007; Aghasafari, 2006; Salahi, 1998) have delved into the relations between EQ and learning strategies, reading comprehension and academic achievement. Fahim and Pishghadam (2007) through Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale III (Wechsler, 1997) for measuring learners' Intelligence Quotient (IQ), Bar-on EQ Scale for measuring learners' EQ and Verbal Intelligence (VI), investigated the influence of linguistic intelligence, psychometric intelligence, and EI on the academic achievement of EFL learners, which was evaluated based on their university GPAs. They discovered a strong significant link between several dimensions of EI and academic achievement. Between academic achievement and IQ, no correlation was found, but a strong relationship was proved with verbal intelligence which is a subscale of IQ. Pishghadam (2009) also studied the impact of emotional and verbal intelligence on English language success in Iran. The results of the product-based phase of his study revealed instrumentality of EI in learning various skills, particularly, productive ones.

Every chosen word and grammatical structure at the time of speaking could be thought of as a decision to be made and as a risk to be taken specially while the word is a new one and the speaker is not sure of the usage. Thus, it seems rational to assume influence for emotions on speaking. A significant positive correlation was found by Soodmand, Afshar and Rahimi (2016), who studied EI in relation to reflective thinking and speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners. They also found EI a significantly strong predictor of speaking ability among EFL learners'. Zarafshan and Ardeshiri (2012) investigated the influences of EI on English proficiency of Iranian EFL university students. 135

undergraduate students in Hormozgan province of Iran majoring in applied linguistics and English translation in Islamic Azad University took part in the research. Nelson English Language Test, Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory were utilized in the study. Data analysis showed that there was a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and English proficiency. Khooei, S. (2014) found that among five components of EI, general mood components were significantly correlated just with complexity of speaking. Bora (2012) also studied 21 EFL learners at a university in Turkey to examine EI level and the language learners' perception toward speaking classes. A questionnaire to calculate learners' EI and another one for their views toward activities in conversation classes were utilized. The results showed that EI has an active role in language learning and it is important for being an active participant in conversation classes. Zarezadeh (2014) studied EI function in learning English and realized a significant relationship between participants' achievement and Stress Management; for Adaptability, Reading skills and Stress management also the same holds true, and a similar result for General Mood and Adaptability, and finally for speaking skill and EI and Intrapersonal Intelligence and Stress Management. EI appeared to be effective on speaking skill.

#### **METHOD**

As the requirements for having a true experimental group were not satisfied and the research had to be done in classes which were grouped from before, the design of the study is 'Quasi Experimental study'. Both at the beginning of the experiment and at the end of the educational year -which was the period that EQ was being taught to the students- questionnaires were administered.

#### **Participants**

The participants of the study were all studying EFL in Iran. Interchange Placement Test was utilized at the beginning to achieve an accurate evaluation of the learners' proficiency. The subjects were 43 intermediate EFL learners, selected from a population of 56 EFL learners after removing the outliers from the study. Participants were freshmen and with an age range of 18 to 23. Out of 30 learners in the experimental group, 12 subjects were males and 18 were females. The control group was composed of 13 students (7 male and 6 female). The control group majored in English literature students while the experimental group majored in applied linguistics (i.e.: English teaching). No extra-curricular classes have been met for the participants before matriculation in university, thus it could be alleged that the participants' proficiency provided a homogeneous group at the beginning of the project. Affirming their consent verbally, participants were willing to participate in the study. After gathering the questionnaires, some of the participants were randomly selected and interviewed to check the reliability of their responses.

#### **Data Measurement**

Likert scale, also termed a 'summated instrument scale' (Coldwell & Herbst, 2004) was utilized in the study. In EQ questionnaire each item had a score from 0 – 5 which means that the items can be summed and produce a total score. Higher total EQ scores indicate stronger emotional intelligence skills.

**Instruments**

The 'Bar-On EI' test and a standard IELTS test were given to the students, for the purpose of the study. To measure EQ, Bar-On developed a 133-item self-report EI scale. Using a five-point Likert Scale ranging from Never to Always, 'The emotional quotient inventory EQ-I' offers an estimate of EQ composed of 5 major scales and 15 subscales. The Persian version of the test was applied because Dehshiri (2003) asserted that the Persian version of the test is both valid and reliable considering Iranian culture. The total reliability of the questionnaire was 0.82, estimated via Cronbach's alpha. An IELTS test was given to the students to separately measure all four language skills before evaluating EQ. Then EQ class started along with a course in speaking. After receiving instructions for one year, the same IELTS test was administered to the students as post test to measure their progress in each language skill and their EQ was concurrently evaluated through the same questionnaire to check whether their EQ has changed, or not.

**Procedure and Data Collection**

The research was done at the official university of Gonabad, Khorasan-Razavi province during one educational year (2016-2017). Learners were made acquainted with the questionnaire (the Bar-On EQ test), and the activities they would do to enhance their emotional intelligence and the advantages of EI to make them more willing to participate in the study. Then Interchange Placement test was administered to make sure that the proficiency level of the students is almost the same and there would be no outliers. Intermediate students were selected to participate in an IELTS test in order to measure their ability in each of the four language skills. Then students were given instruction on EQ, what it is and how we can make a change and enhance it. Some sessions were assigned for making the learners familiar with emotional intelligence and then giving lessons on EQ were started. In order to increase the reliability (inter rater reliability) of the IELTS test scores gained by the respondents, two raters scored both the pre and the post-test of IELTS. Then, the average of both scores was calculated for each respondent, once for the pre-test and again for post-test.

**Emotional Intelligence Enhancement**

The main source of the content provided for teaching EQ was a book written by Adele B. Lynn. The title of the manual was '*50 Activities for Developing Emotional Intelligence*'. Teaching EQ was the center of attention in each class and each of the four language skills were being taught based on teaching and enhancing EQ, for example, the topics for writing compositions were chosen based on emotional issues. After writing about emotional topics, their feelings and experience were being discussed in the classroom and they shared it with peers. The same was being done for other skills. In order to get a grasp of the assignments on writing and consequently speaking, some texts were assigned to be studied as the content of reading materials. To make learners better able to label their emotions in a meaningful way, reading texts were chosen based on the amount of emotional content they had then they became familiar with various emotional words, expression and idioms. In a parallel class which was the control group and received no instruction on EI, the same process was followed.



## FINDINGS

Statistical Package for Social Sciences ((SPSS, version 22) was utilized to analyze the data (significance level 0.05). Descriptive statistics for the experimental and control groups in pre-test of EQ is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for the control and experimental groups' performance on EQ Test (Pre-test)

Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control	13	317	511	450.61	55.44
Experimental	30	377	572	483.56	47.50

To ensure the normality of the distribution of the two groups at pre-test, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was run. The results revealed that the distribution of scores was normal in each group at pre-test (Control: N= 13, Statistic= .201, p= .155; Experimental: N= 30, Statistics= .109, p= .200). Using Parametric statistics, to compare the mean scores of the two groups at the pre-test, an independent samples t-test was run. The results for the performance of the experimental and control groups at the pre-test of EQ showed no significant difference between the EQ mean scores of the two group at the beginning (t= -1.986, p= .054). Descriptive statistics obtained from the control and experimental groups for speaking skill at the beginning of the experiment is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for the control and experimental groups' performance on speaking test (Pre-test)

Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control	13	3.5	5	4.21	.37
Experimental	30	3	7	4.26	.84

The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test did not show a normal distribution of scores in two groups on the pre-test (Control: N= 13, Statistic= .250, p= .026; Experimental: N= 30, Statistics= .323, p= .000); therefore, non-parametric statistics was used.

Table 3

Test statistics table for the two groups' speaking skill on the pre-test

	Speaking (Pre-Test)
Mann-Whitney U	169.000
Wilcoxon W	634.000
Z	-.733
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.464
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.505

The results of Mann-Whitney Test for the performance of the experimental and control groups at the pre-test of speaking were as follows: Mean Rank<sub>Experimental</sub>= 21.13 and Mean Rank<sub>Control</sub>=24.00. Thus, there was no significant difference between the two groups regarding the mean scores of speaking at the beginning (U=169, p > .05). Obtained descriptive statistics from the experimental and control groups on the EQ test at the post-test is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics for the performance of experimental and control group on the EQ Test (Post-test)

Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control	13	321	516	455.30	56.87
Experimental	30	397	607	506.86	52.98

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that there was a normal distribution in each group at the post-test both in experimental group (N= 30, Statistic=.071, p=.200) and in control group (N=13, Statistic=.232, p=.054). Independent sample t-test for the control and experimental groups' performance at the post-test of EQ showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups in the mean scores of EQ at the post-test ( $t = -2.867$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Table 5. reveals the descriptive statistics for the gain scores in EQ test.

Table 5

Descriptive statistics for the both groups' gain scores on EQ Test

Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control	13	-23	39	4.69	16.73
Experimental	30	-35	76	23.3	22.36

The distribution of the gain scores were normal in each group both in experimental group (N= 30, Statistic= .128, p= .200) and in control group (N= 13, Statistic= .209, p= .125). Independent sample t-test for the experimental and control groups' gain scores of EQ showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups regarding the mean scores of the gain scores ( $t = -2.68$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Descriptive statistics obtained from the control and experimental groups for the speaking skill at the post-test is shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for the Control and Experimental Groups' Performance on the Speaking Test (Post-Test)

Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control	13	4	6	4.61	.61
Experimental	30	4	8	6.08	1.03

The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that the distribution of scores was normal in the control group (N=13, Statistics=.225, p=.071) but it was not normal in the experimental group at the post-test (N=30, Statistics=.168, p=.031).

Table 7

Test statistics table for the two groups' speaking skill on the post-test

	Speaking (Post-Test)
Mann-Whitney U	45.500
Wilcoxon W	136.500
Z	-3.998
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.000

The results of Mann-Whitney Test for the performance of the experimental (Mean Rank=26.98) and control groups (Mean Rank=10.50) at the post-test of the speaking skill demonstrate that there was a significant difference between the two groups in the scores of speaking at the post-test ( $U=45.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Descriptive statistics obtained from the control and experimental groups for the gain scores of the speaking skill is shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Descriptive statistics for the control and experimental groups' speaking gain scores

Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control	13	-.5	2	.40	.67
Experimental	30	-3	4	1.81	1.52

The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that the distribution of scores was normal in each group for the gain scores ( $N=13$ , Statistics=.212,  $p=.112$  for control group and  $N=30$ , Statistics=.148,  $p=.093$  for experimental one). The results of independent sample t-test for the performance of the experimental and control groups in the gain scores of speaking showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups regarding the gain scores of the speaking skill ( $t=-4.21$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

## DISCUSSION

It has been proven that by dint of steadfast application, individuals can excel their emotional and social competencies (e.g. Ogunyemi, 2008). EI as a notably important construct in learning and success has been subject to being enhanced and many scholars have tried to make a breakthrough (e.g. Schutte et al., 2001). The resources providing exercises for EI development are at disposal but detailed training program information does not satisfactorily exist, especially for EQ development of university students (Salami, 2010; Lin et al., 2011). The current study examined the influence of EI enhancement on developing Speaking skill. EQ increased significantly in this experimental study along with speaking skill. The results are in agreement with the results of some investigations. Dulewicz and Higgs (2004) studied 59 managers in an EI training program hold for one month; significant results regarding EI enhancement in their EQ scores along with improvement in five of the elements of it was observed.

Successful development of EI has been evidenced in the works of Boyatzis, Stubbs, and Taylor (2002) and also Murray, Jordan, and Thompson (2006). The results of the findings of the above mentioned scholars are in line with the results of the current research.

The American express program was administered by Cherniss and Caplan (2001) and results showed that just about 90% of the subjects alleged positive job-related benefits. A significant change in the EQ of experimental group was obtained by Slaski and Cartwright (2002)'s four-week-course of instructions which is in the same line with what happened for the present study. Some longitudinal research like those of Vaillant (2000) and also Kagan (1998) were confirmed by the present research.

Aghasafari (2006) and Fahim and Pishghadam (2007) also found EQ to be linked with academic success which was confirmed in the current study. Soodmand, Afshar and Rahimi (2016), who studied EI in relation to reflective thinking and speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners discovered a significant positive correlation. EI was found in their study to be a significantly strong predictor of speaking ability. The present research verified their findings. Also the results of the current study disconfirm Zarafshan and Ardeshiri (2012) who investigated the influences of EI on English proficiency and claimed that there was a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and English proficiency. The results of this study are in line with Khooei's study (2014) who found a relationship between EI and its components and oral task fluency, accuracy, and complexity among Iranian EFL learners. EI was shown positively related to oral performance and also, stress management and interpersonal subcategories had a significant relationship with both fluency and accuracy of oral performance and intrapersonal adaptability, and general mood components were significantly correlated just with complexity of speaking.

Bora (2012) studied the level of EI and the perception of language learners toward speaking classes among subjects who were 21 EFL learners at a university in Turkey. His results showed that EI has an active role in language learning and for being an active participant in conversation classes. The results of the current study verified Bora's finding. The learners showed a greater level of speaking in comparison with those who did not receive instructions on EQ. The study confirmed Zarezadeh (2014) who found a significant relationship between speaking skill and EI and Intrapersonal Intelligence and Stress Management. For this researcher EI appeared to be effective on speaking skill.

Also considering academic achievement, development was found in writing skill in the study of Pool (1997), which is similar to the current study on speaking skill. Ghabanchi and Rastegar (2014) also faced similar results in writing progress. Brand (1989) theorized that writing skill is dependent upon emotions from the beginning and during writing, revising and also drafting. The findings of the current study could bring practical evidence to develop that theory.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the current investigation, it was presumed that enhancing EQ causes improvement in speaking skill because language is dependent on affective factors. EQ was taught and at the end of the experiment the results of the data analysis indicated a significant increase in both EQ and Speaking Skill. The implications of the study are as follows: educational system (especially in Iran) can pay more attention to the issue of EI and after doing more thorough studies and checking the generalizability of the results of the current study by replicating it in different contexts with various participants) syllabus designers might reconsider the content of the syllabi. EQ can also have room in new syllabi, regarding the influence of it on education. Furthermore, it seems necessary to inform teachers and instructors in educational system of the influence of EQ, and thus making them informed of the role of EQ in education and success. Even if no change in syllabi would be approved, at least workshops on EQ for teachers or some in-service instructions seem to be fruitful.

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