THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE AMONG IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract: This study aimed to find out whether there is any meaningful relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Willingness to Communicate. 60 intermediate female and male foreign language learners were selected among 100 participants from different Iranian English language centers. The data for this study was collected by means of two types of questionnaires: Bar-On’s (1997) Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) and McIntyre, Baker, Clement, and Conrod’s (2001) Willingness to Communicate (WTC) questionnaire. The questionnaires were correlated using Pearson product-moment correlation to find any meaningful relationship between the two constructs. The results revealed a significant relationship between EQ and WTC outside of the classroom. Regarding language learning contexts, it can help language teachers and educators to get more familiar with their students’ preferences and emotions as communication is an indispensable part of learning a foreign language.

Index Terms: Emotional Intelligence; Language Communication; Willingness to Communicate

1. Introduction

As communicative approach changed language teaching domain dramatically, more scholars have emphasized the importance of communication in language learning practices. Also, based on what affective factors require in psychology of language learning, motivating learners and making them willing to communicate provide an active language learning classroom. Therefore, using L2 actively in language learning settings leads to the emergence of a phenomenon called Willingness to Communicate (WTC). On the other hand, there is the emotional side of human behavior which consists of several personality factors about ourselves and others whom we communicate with. Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined Emotional Intelligence as the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and use it to guide one’s thinking and action. Also, MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Donouan (2002) defined WTC as an underlying inclination toward or away from communicating.

It has become more and more difficult to ignore communication and interaction in a language teaching contexts and this requires encouraging learners to do so which, in turn, needs getting to know learners as much as possible. Knowing learners may refer to many different properties among which psychological factors are much related to the present article. Brown (2007) has categorized Willingness to Communicate (WTC), empathy, extroversion, and motivation under personality factors of learners which should be considered in a language learning context. The online Encyclopedia Britannica defines empathy as the ability to imagine oneself in another’s place and understand the other’s feelings, desires, ideas, and actions. Also, it defines motivation as forces acting either on or within a person to initiate behavior. According to the online New World Encyclopedia Extroverts tend to be energetic, enthusiastic, action-oriented, talkative, and assertive. Therefore, an extroverted person is likely to enjoy time spent with people and find less reward in time spent alone. Extroverts are actually energized by being with people and become tired and bored when they have to spend long periods of time alone. In the same vein, we regard Willingness to Communicate, an indication of learners’ communication tendency, as an indispensable aspect of affective and emotional domain of learners in which Emotional Intelligence can be also an indication of...
the part. Following these lines, this article attempted to find out whether there is any meaningful relationship between Wil-
lingness to Communicate and Emotional Intelligence of learners by utilizing two questionnaires, MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, Conrod (2001) for WTC and Bar-On’s Emotional Quotient Inventory for Emotional Intelligence.

This paper aimed to investigate significant relationship between Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and Emotional Intelligence (EQ). For this purpose, two questionnaires (A Bar-On’s (1997) Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) and McIntyre’s et al. (2001) Willingness to Communicate (WTC) were utilized in this study. Finally, the two sets of data were correlated using Pearson product-moment Correlation. The present study was an attempt to provide answer to the following questions:

1. Is there any significant relationship between Willingness to Communicate inside the class and Emotional Intelligence?
2. Is there any significant relationship between Willingness to Communicate outside the class and Emotional Intelligence?
3. Is there any significant relationship between orientation for language learning and Emotional Intelligence?

2. Review of the Related Literature

2.1 Theoretical Background

2.1.1 Emotional Intelligence

Taking a glance at the related literature, concepts like emotion has been universally appreciated in the realm of lan-
guage learning and teaching during recent decades. Having a shallow understanding of the term Emotional Intelligence, it arises controversies because there has been considerable distinction among such terms as emotions and reason, intellect or thinking rationally for years. Beginning with the work by Thorndike in 1920 on Social Intelligence, we now are encoun-
tered with innumerable researches relating it to other fields of study. Bar-on (2006) stated that emotional intelligence is to know oneself and others, contacting effectively with people, getting used to various circumstances to become successful in facing with environmental demands. Also, he asserted that a normal individual with average EQ will be more successful in encountering a variety of environmental demands.

Some researchers observe Emotional Intelligence as a distinct group of mental abilities and others regard it as an eclec-
tic positive trait such as happiness, self-esteem, etc. (Salovey, Mayer, & Caruso, 2008). In the first viewpoint, Emotional Intelligence consists of four abilities which are ordered in a hierarchy of skills and each one consists of a spectrum of emo-
tions. This model conceptualizes on cognitive ability. The second viewpoint, Trait Emotional Intelligence, is a self-report measurement which conceptualizes on personality trait. Bar-On (2006) stated that “all models of human behavior are in-fluenced at least to some extent by a mixed cross-section of bio-psycho-social predictors and facilitators including biomed-
ical predispositions and conditions, cognitive intelligence, personality, motivation and environmental influences” (p.18).

Bar-on also has provided a scale to measure Emotional Intelligence (EQ-i) and asserted that

Emotional-social intelligence, as conceptualized by the Bar-On’s model, is a multi-factorial array of interrelated emo-
tional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that influence one’s ability to recognize, understand and manage emo-
tions, to relate with others, to adapt to change and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature, and to efficiently cope with daily demands, challenges and pressures.

2.1.2 Willingness to Communicate (WTC)

There is a large volume of published studies describing the role of communication and interaction in language im-
provement. The first serious discussion and analysis of communication and communicative aspect of language began dur-
ing 1970s with the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching. As the continuum of this process, the concept of wil-
ingness to communicate emerged in 1990s. Pawlak (2015) pointed out that the concept of willingness to communicate (WTC) can be related to different aspects of language such as, psychological, educational and communicative dimensions. According to MacCroskey (1992), Willingness to Communicate is a predisposition to start or sometimes refuse communication with others. As MacCrosky and Richmond (1991) stated, self-esteem or confidence in one’s own worth or abilities, introversion, a personality type characterized as finding meaning within, preferring internal world of thoughts, feelings, fantasies, and dreams, communication apprehension which was defined by McCroskey as “an individual’s level of fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (1977, p. 78), and communica-
tion competence as a language user’s grammatical knowledge of phonology, morphology, syntax etc., as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances properly (Hymes, 1966) are all originated from Willingness to commu-
nicate.
Clement, Dornyei, MacIntyre, and Noels (1998) figured out that Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in second language (L2) cannot be the same as simple manifestation of WTC in L1. The reason is that willingness to communicate in L2 is a complex phenomenon. According to MacIntyre (2001), if learners look for L2 communication and are willing to communicate either inside communicate, they will have active and autonomous students. He also believed that learners who have high WTC will be more involved in doing activities in both inside and outside the class.

MacIntyre (2007) pointed out that Willingness to Communicate (WTC) can be regarded as preparing to speak L2 with specific individuals. It can be a step to start a communication in L2. Willingness to communicate (WTC) has got several scales. These scales are pairs, small groups meetings and public occasions, with three different types of interlocutors or audiences: friends, acquaintances and strangers (Chan & MacCrosky, 1987; MacCrosky, 1992; MacCrosky & Richmond, 1990). MacIntyre (1994) noted that researchers primarily focused on L1 communication. As time passed, researchers’ attention altered toward L2 willingness to get involved in interaction. He also highlighted that L2 Willingness to Communicate is affected by communication competence and communication anxiety.

2.2 Related Studies

A number of studies have been done regarding the role of emotional intelligence on learning. These studies are either in the form books or review articles (Brackett & Salovey, 2006; Marquez, Gil-Olarte, & Brackett 2006; Williford, 2000). Also Pishghadam (2009) investigated the impact of both emotional and verbal Intelligences on English language learning among Iranian EFL learners. He highlighted that learners with general moods, higher interpersonal scores, and ability to manage stress are the most successful learners.

Matthews, Roberts, and Zeinder (2002) investigated that Emotional Intelligence has an influential role in life and academic success. Also, researchers attempted to motivate learners to speak and communicate in the classroom (Donaldson, Palmer & Stough, 2002; Murphy, 2006). Tod (2006) attempted to find out the relationship between learner-teacher performance and Emotional Intelligence. They came to this realization that they were positively related. Moafian (2009) studied the ESL teachers’ emotional intelligence and their self-efficacy in language centres. The result showed there was a significant relationship between teachers’ EQ and their self-efficacy.

Several studies have been done regarding the apparent role of WTC in L2 context such as studies that concerned WTC in French among Canadian learners (Baker and MacIntyre, 2000). As Baker and MacIntyre (2000) reported, context has a significant impact on WTC. It concentrated on factors that contribute WTC among immersion and non-immersion learners. They observed that learners’ WTC relies on L2 confidence which is related to anxiety. Immersion contexts resemble the characteristics of L1 situations in which anxiety is the single best predictor of WTC (Yashima, 2012).

MacIntyre et al. (2002) have done a cross-sectional study to find out the influence of both age and gender on WTC. For this end, he developed a questionnaire. Cao and Philp (2006) claimed that, by considering three classroom organization modes, which are pair work, group work, and whole class the learners’ level of WTC can be examined. They found no correlation between trait WTC and situational WTC. They concluded that group size, level of self-confidence, being familiar in interaction with other participants affect WTC level.

Peng and Woodrow (2011) analyzed the role of classroom environmental factors in L2 WTC meticulously. The study was conducted in a Chinese context. The authors attempted to find a relationship among WTC, motivation, communication confidence, classroom setting and learners’ belief. Finally, they came to this conclusion that confidence is the significant predictor of WTC.

In a study which was done by Kang (2005) a number of factors like group size, self-confidence, familiarity with interlocutors that affect WTC were identified. During this research, he found several variables like security, excitement, and sense of responsibility that help participants’ WTC. Each of these variables was affected by some factors. These factors are topics of the conversation, interlocutor or the person who takes part in a dialogue or conversation, and conversational context or the environment the conversation takes place in.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

100 Iranian EFL learners took the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) in several English language centres of Sanandaj, Iran. 60 intermediate participants were selected. They were both male and female. All the learners were trilingual.
3.2 Instruments

First, Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administered to be assured that all the participants for this study were in the same proficiency level, an Oxford Placement Test (OPT, 2001) was conducted. The second version of this test was used. Participants were required to answer the test within 30 minutes. Then Willingness to Communicate (WTC) questionnaire was delivered to the participant. In 2001, MacIntyre et al. designed a Likert-type questionnaire. It measures learners’ willingness to communicate. It has three sections: inside the class (27 items), outside the class (27 items), and orientation for language learning (20 items). The Likert-scale for the two first sections were from 1 to 5, and the third part 1 to 6. At the end, Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) was delivered too. In 1997, Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory was developed. It consists of 90 questions. Each question has five Likert scale from 5(Completely agree) to 1(Completely disagree). Pishghadam (2009) measured its reliability. It was 0.93 by Cronbach’s Alpha.

3.3 Procedure

At the very beginning of the research process, Oxford Placement Test (OPT, 2001) was given within 30 minutes to be sure that all the learners in this study were at the same proficiency level. Then the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) and Bar-on Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) were distributed among the learners.

For WTC questionnaire, learners were required to answer the questions in three parts. The range of the scales for the first 54 questions (inside and outside willingness) was from 1 to 5. These scales were 1= Almost never willing, 2= sometimes willing, 3= willing half of the time, 4= usually willing and 5= almost always willing. The scales for the third part (orientation to language learning) were different. 1= strongly agree, 2= moderately agree, 3= mildly agree, 4 = mildly disagree, 5= moderately disagree, and 6= strongly disagree. EQ-i questionnaire contained 90 questions. For each question 5 Likert scale were provided. It was from 5 to 1. They were 5= completely agree, 4= agree, 3= somewhat agree, 2= disagree, and 1= completely disagree.

4. Result

At first the data was analyzed to find out whether the data was normal or not.

Table 1
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Testing the Data Normality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>Orientations for language learning</th>
<th>WTC Inside the classroom</th>
<th>WTC Outside the classroom</th>
<th>EQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Parameters&lt;sup&gt;a,b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>6.9000</td>
<td>88.5667</td>
<td>87.3333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>3.38841</td>
<td>20.02656</td>
<td>21.94189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Extreme Differences</td>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>-.125</td>
<td>-.119</td>
<td>-.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z</td>
<td>.458</td>
<td>.925</td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>.998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.980</td>
<td>.359</td>
<td>.895</td>
<td>.272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Test distribution is Normal.

<sup>b</sup> Calculated from data.

The result of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test revealed that the collected data was normal in all variables (p≥0.05), and parametric test can be used. (See table 1).

Considering the aim of the research Pearson product-moment Correlation was utilized. The results were illustrated in table 2.

Based on the below research questions, the extracted data was analyzed.

1. Is there any significant relationship between Willingness to Communicate inside the class and Emotional Intelligence?
2. Is there any significant relationship between Willingness to Communicate outside the class and Emotional Intelligence?
3. Is there any significant relationship between orientation for language learning and Emotional Intelligence?

It is apparent from Table 2 that there is a significant and direct relationship between Emotional intelligence and willingness to communicate outside the class. (r=0.241, p=0.043). Between orientation for language learning and Willingness to Communicate inside the class the relationship is also meaningful and direct at 0.05, (r=0.246, p=0.048). A strong and meaningful relationship exists between Willingness to Communicate outside the classroom and inside the classroom at 0.01 too, (r=0.882, p=0.001). Table 2 illustrates correlation test between Willingness to Communicate outside the classroom and Emotional Intelligence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>EQ</th>
<th>WTC Inside the classroom</th>
<th>Orientations for language learning</th>
<th>WTC Outside the classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EQ</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>-.048</td>
<td>.241^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>.718</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTC Inside the classroom</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.246^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientations for language</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.048</td>
<td>.246^</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.718</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTC Outside the classroom</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.241^</td>
<td>.882^</td>
<td>.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.248</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As it is shown in Table 3, there is a direct and significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Willingness to Communicate outside the classroom components which are speaking outside the classroom (r=0.316, p=0.014) and reading outside the classroom (r=0.286, p=0.027) at 0.05.
5. Discussion and Conclusion

Some studies have been conducted on the relationship between EQ and WTC. Align with findings of this study, Taba-tabaei and Jamshidifar (2013) investigated the correlation between the two constructs. Their study revealed that emotional intelligence had significant relationship with WTC. Also, as they studied the relationship of gender with EQ and IWB, they found that females with higher EQ are more successful in their communications. Ketabdar, Yazdani, and Yarahmadi (2014) showed a positive relationship between EFL Learners’ WTC and four factors of the EQ-i named: Interpersonal Relationship (IP), Empathy (EM), Assertiveness (AS), and Emotional Self-Awareness (ES) and EQ.

In response to the questions of the research, these tables are quite revealing in several ways. First, there is a meaningful relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Willingness to Communicate outside the classroom not inside the classroom that is the relationship between Willingness to Communicate inside the class and Emotional Intelligence is not as significant as the relationship between Willingness to Communicate outside the class and Emotional Intelligence i.e. those learners with higher Emotional Intelligence have also a higher tendency toward communicating outside of the classroom. This might be an indication of the direct relations between emotional factors and willingness of learners toward communicating outside of the class. This is an interesting result to emerge from the data.

Regarding the relationship between Willingness to Communicate outside the class and Emotional Intelligence, there are four components to consider: speaking outside the classroom, reading outside the classroom, writing outside the classroom, and comprehension outside the classroom. As table 3 illustrates, the relationships are significant and direct between Emotional Intelligence and speaking and reading outside the classroom, but not significant between the other two components i.e. writing and comprehension outside the classroom and.

The study has gone some way towards enhancing the understanding of emotional factors learners possess and learning a second or foreign language inside the class which is a most prominent factor in the field of second and foreign language teaching in today’s literature. The present study provides additional evidence with respect to the difference it represents between Emotional Intelligence and willingness to communicate inside and outside the classroom. This study also is reporting an advantage in those who have higher Emotional Intelligence

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