



# The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and English Reading Proficiency of Iranian Students

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## ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to find out to see any possible relationship between emotional intelligence and reading proficiency within English language students. This study aimed to determine whether emotional intelligence and English reading proficiency are correlated. In this work participants were 110 fresh men English language students, studying in Azad University, Tehran- North Branch, both male and female, who selected randomly. Regression and correlation analyses were used and results indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between the emotional intelligence and English reading proficiency, and also there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence sub- factors and English reading proficiency with no relationship between gender and two variables.

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## Introduction

The origin of emotional intelligence returned to the concept of social intelligence, that was the human relationship capacity. This view didn't receive seriously until the mid- 1980 when his view was renewed in the works of Howard Gardner (Goleman, 1995). Gardner (1983), presented eight different types of intelligence, such as "personal intelligence". At last Salovey and Mayer (1990), proposed the most complete model of EI and explained that is as a form of social intelligence which contained the ability of perception, understanding, and management of one's own emotions and those of other people. Afterward, the EI was suggested by Bar-On (1997), as important factor of one's life. In order to estimate the level of EI, he used his psychological experience and designed a test, including five major scales and 15 subscales as following.

- 1-Intrapersonal: self- regard, emotional self – awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self – actualization.
- 2-Inter personal: empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationship.
- 3-Stress- management : stress tolerance and impulse control.
- 4-Adaptability: reality - testing, flexibility, and problem solving.
- 5-General mood: optimism and happiness.

## Litratue Review

There has been enormous body of research on learner's emotional intelligence and English learning skills, which some of them are following:

### EQ and language Learning skills

The study conducted by Zarezadeh, T. (2012), was an attempt to find out whether intelligence affects English language learning. To that end 330 learners were supposed to take the EQ questionnaire. After that the correlations between EQ and reading, listening, speaking, writing and GPA measured. The results indicated that there are significant, correlations between EQ, certain and some skills, and academic achievements. Finally, after analyzing the results, some suggestion were made for teachers and authors. As the result she claimed that emotional intelligence affects English language learning. This study considered the function of the emotional intelligence in learning English. It also showed that there are a significant correlation

between subjects' achievement, stress management and adaptability.

As the investigator found out, there is an effective relationship between emotional intelligence and speaking skill. Since the speaking is a reciprocal process which occurs in a special conditions and between one speaker and others, so intrapersonal intelligence, and general mood have a great effect on it, and also by the results, a significant correlation is showed between emotional intelligence and reading skills. The aspects that can assist the language learners are, the stress management, general mood and adaptability a great deal. To achieve a good success, the learners must do something like managing their own stresses, have a good general mood and adapt themselves to the content of the text that they are reading. Finally, it also seems that there is a correlation between the listening skill and intrapersonal intelligence, that means, the individuals, with a high awareness have a greater self- steam and self – confidence too that make them professional listeners.

### EQ and Listening Comprehension

Valizadeh, and Alavinia, (2013), in the current study were probing the potential relationship between emotional intelligence foreign language listening anxiety, and listening comprehension performance of Iranian EFL learners. To this end, 233 participants, studying English language and literature at three different universities in Urmia, were at first selected as population. To Success a running homogeneity test, the number of participants removed and only 160 qualified subjects, out of original number went on with the remainder of the study. To gather data two instruments, i.e. Bar-On's (1997), emotional quotient inventory (EQ-i), and FLIA scale were used.

The results of the multiple regression analyses for the predictability power of EI for listening comprehension performance and FLLA expressed EI as a proper indicator for listening comprehension performance and FLLA of learners. Finally, based on multiple regression analysis FLLA was exposed a proper predictor of listening comprehension performance of EFL learners.

**Table 1. Correlation between EQ and Reading test**

		EQ	reading2
Total	Pearson Correlation	1	.516**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	92	92
reading2	Pearson Correlation	.516**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	92	92

**Table 3. Independent Samples Test of gender's effect of EQ test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Total	Equal variances assumed	1.290	.259	-.925	90	.358	-9.36257	10.12541	-29.47848	10.75333
	Equal variances not assumed			-.907	73.965	.368	-9.36257	10.32681	-29.93936	11.21421

**Table 4. Independent Samples Test of gender's effect on the reading test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
reading2	Equal variances assumed	.226	.635	1.592	90	.115	.87037	.54676	-.21585	1.95660
	Equal variances not assumed			1.557	73.238	.124	.87037	.55896	-.24357	1.98431

The current study dealt with the probably role of some these factors like emotional intelligence and anxiety as the potential energy and external factors by which the process of listening comprehension is influenced.

Valizadeh and Alavinia (2013), supposed that while emotional intelligence is likely involved and affect on listening process in a positive way, anxiety has not any role in listening performance in learners.

Based on the significant correlations reported in the current study between foreign language listening anxiety, and listening comprehension performance of learners, it can be claimed that, to improve learning outcomes, too much attention can be paid by learners to increase their EQ level and decrease their worries and anxieties. Also the teachers should be guided to act calmly and create non-threatening atmosphere for learning, to encourage and empower students to act effectively in the process of learning. Indeed the above mentioned researchers believed that, the negative or positive emotions through the learning task, should be taught to learners in order to act independently. They should learn how to control them and manage the thoughts.

### Methodology

#### Statement of the Problem

All we know the human beings is born by an inevitable degree of quotient which is called IQ that involves with 20% of achievements, now we should believe that success is not only influenced by IQ, but also by various factors that constitute a person's character, and personality or their emotional intelligence. Learners vary in how successful they are in learning second language. Some people learn a second language easily and some with difficulty, so many factors are involved to second language learning success, like motivation, attitude, personality and degree of intelligence which individuals possess. EQ is the ability which motivate oneself and persist in the face

of frustration. (Goleman, 1995). So teachers who want to help their students' proficiency, might improve their students' emotional intelligence skills.

### Objective and Research Questions

The objective of this study, is to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and English reading proficiency among Iranian university students.

1-Is there any significant relationship between emotional intelligence and English reading proficiency of Iranian learners?

2-Is there any statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence sub-factors (self-regard, awareness, assertiveness, independence, self-actualization, empathy, social relationship, stress management, impulse control, adaptability, interpersonal relationship, reality testing, flexibility, problem solving, general mood, optimism, happiness) and English reading proficiency of Iranian learners?

3-Is there any statistically significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence?

4-Is there any significant relationship between gender and Iranian English reading proficiency?

### Significance of the study

This study hopes to have the following significance:

- Presenting the EQ and its elements, and getting students familiar with the EQ which now a days is known as the most important kind of intelligence.

- Give a chance to students, to improve their English reading proficiency by using the elements of EQ.

To conduct this study toward its objectives, the participants comprising the population were 110 bachelor students who were studying English language in Azad University, both male and female, that 92 sample selected among them. The instruments used to fulfill this research were:

1- A questionnaire taken from Bar On's Emotional Inventory including 90 items were ranging from *strongly agree to strongly disagree*.

2- An IELTS Reading Test taken from McCarter & Ash including multiple choice, matching tests and Yes/No questions test. Our measurement followed four different steps:

1- Taking an IELTS reading test to identify the outliers.

2- Taking An EQ Bar- On's inventory test to measure EQ level of students.

3- A reading test to measure the relationship between EQ and reading proficiency of students.

4- The same EQ Bar – On's inventory test to ensure about the reliability of the questionnaire.

### Results and Discussion

To understand the results, this study attempt to answer four questions:

#### Results related to study question (1)

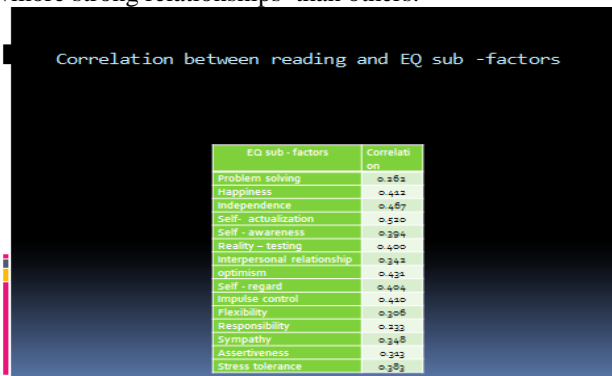
Is there any significant relationship between emotional intelligence and English reading proficiency of Iranian learners?

Ensuring the normality of data, the researcher calculated the correlation between Reading and Emotional Intelligence Test Scores by Pearson formula. The results showed the number 0.516 that states there is a positive and strong correlation between two variables, based on following table.

#### Results related to study question (2)

Is there any statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence sub – factors?

The researcher concluded that there is a significant correlation between emotional intelligence sub – factors and reading proficiency of Iranian learners, which some sub – factors show more strong relationships than others.



EQ sub - factors	Correlation
Problem solving	0.362
Happiness	0.412
Independence	0.487
Self-actualization	0.520
Self-awareness	0.394
Reality-testing	0.400
Interpersonal relationship	0.344
Optimism	0.434
Self-regard	0.404
Impulse control	0.440
Flexibility	0.306
Responsibility	0.323
Sympathy	0.348
Assertiveness	0.312
Stress tolerance	0.383

#### Results related to study question (3)

Is there any statistically significant relationship between gender and emotional intelligence?

To determine if the gender has a positive effect on emotional intelligence scores or not, the researcher accomplished T-test for emotional intelligence scores and gender. The results showed the mean of scores of emotional intelligence are the same in male and females (9.36257), or there is no significant relationship between gender and their scores of emotional intelligence.

According to significance value (p – value) of 0.358 which was >0.05 in T-test, and the equal means of males and females, it was concluded that gender doesn't affect on EQ test.

#### Results related to study question (4)

Is there any significant relationship between gender and Iranian English reading proficiency? To determine if the gender has a positive effect on reading proficiency scores or not, the researcher accomplished T-test for reading proficiency scores and gender. The results showed the mean of scores of reading proficiency are the same in male and females (0.87037),

or there is no significant relationship between gender and their scores of reading proficiency.

According to significance value (p – value) of 0.115 which was >0.05 in T-test, and the equal means of males and females, it was concluded that gender doesn't affect on reading test.

### Summary of Findings

The first result indicated a significant and strong relationship between Iranian learners' reading proficiency and emotional intelligence ( $r = 0.516$ ). The second result is related to the investigating the relationship between each EQ sub- factors and Iranian learners' reading proficiency separately, which demonstrated all variables of EQ were in relation with reading proficiency. Third result indicated that gender has no effect on emotional intelligence scores and lastly, it's determined that gender has no effect on Iranian learners' reading proficiency.

### Discussion of Findings

Findings in this study also approved the argument made by Rabbani, (2011), This study clearly demonstrated the positive effect of emotional intelligence on speaking performance. The result of this study demonstrated the leading role of the emotional intelligence as an effective factor in the performance of EFL learners that can be improved.

The implications of this research are aimed at teachers. All we know the IQ is an inherited factor with a limited extent which is genetically, but EQ like a skill can be improved much more than IQ through suitable opportunities development. As in this current study, a strong correlation value ( $R = 0.516$ ) are shown regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and Iranian learners' reading proficiency, it can be claimed that in order to increase the reading proficiency level of students, language teachers should improve their students EI appropriately. In this way the role of teachers' knowledge is critical. But almost teachers are not completely successful to do it because of unfamiliarity with culture of target language and also time limitation. Since thousands of learners never have the opportunity to communicate with native speakers, and the standard tests are designed by people who are not familiar with our culture, so such these tests are not suitable for Iranian students. Therefore in order to prepare a suitable materials, the teachers and test developers should consider learners background knowledge. Since different learners enjoy different level of intelligence, the instructors should create the various activities in the classroom, until to be beneficial for students with different abilities.

### Suggestions for Further Study

Every research project leads to new directions for further investigations, so the following are what the researcher suggests for further researches.

1- The research can be conducted by a different version of tests like TOEFL.

2- The effect of emotional intelligence can be investigated on other sections of IELTS test such as writing, listening,...

3- More research needs to be conducted with a larger sample.

4- It would be useful to investigate the relationship between teachers' EQ and his/her teaching in classroom.

5- Investigating the effect of combination of IQ and EQ on English language learning.

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