

IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN IMPROVING LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence has diversified applications in language teaching and learning. The aim of this paper is to give a clear picture of how emotional intelligence helps in understanding and learning a language. It is a fact that emotional intelligence influences every aspect of human life, it can be applied effectively in a language learning process. We know that language teaching is effective if the communication is smooth and in this matter, emotional intelligence can play a vital role. Not much is known regarding all the benefits of emotional intelligence in language teaching or learning process, yet popularizing the term and application of it have been raising over the last two decades. There should be an effort from the teachers and learners in leveraging emotional intelligence for developing more effective learning atmosphere for teaching and educating concerned students.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, language teaching, teachers, students, language learning

I. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence is not new. It has been in discussion since the early years of the 1990s. Psychologists during that time found this aspect of humans an important aspect for many reasons. Before 1970, the focus of the psychologists and scholars was mostly on intelligence testing and cognition. They opined that intelligence is an ability that could be measured and that could solve different types of cognitive issues [1]. However, different scholars like Thorndike, Wechsler, and Gardner had opined differently, to them this was not a case of pure cognitive approach. Thorndike (1920) proposed the concept of social intelligence [2]. According to him, social intelligence is different from abstract or mechanical intelligence. It is important because it determines one's ability to recognize, influence, and manage other people. Five decades later in 1972, popular American psychologist Wechsler proposed three different forms of intelligence, viz. emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and personal intelligence. Later, Gardner (1983) also opined that non-cognitive forms of intelligence are also significant [3]. There are different non-cognitive forms like the ability to have comfortable and smooth relationship with others, the ability to comprehend self-emotions, and of course the interpersonal intelligence.

These changing concepts regarding different forms of intelligence introduced the concept of emotional intelligence in the latter half of the last 20th century.

Mayer and Salovey (1990) were the first scholars to use the term “emotional intelligence”. Here, the scholars have combined both intelligence and emotions to make a new measurable aspect of human psychology [4]. According to them, emotional intelligence is a part of social intelligence that includes one’s ability to focus on the feelings and emotions of others as also of one’s own to understand the difference and then work to mitigate that difference for a common cause. If the other person or persons are showing poor emotional intelligence, then the concerned person must guide him or her to improve on that through some pre-trained process. In 1997, the researchers reconstructed the model and brought four types of abilities in concern:

1. The capability of an individual to access and develop feelings to enable the thought process.
2. The capability of an individual to understand emotion and related knowledge.
3. The capability of an individual to control emotions.
4. The capability of an individual to promote intellectual as also emotional growth.

The researchers described emotional intelligence as a factor of measuring one’s intelligence in an authentic way. There are several other views regarding emotional intelligence. Goleman (1995) popularized the concept. He claimed that emotional intelligence is an ability to keep oneself motivated and strong in times of severe frustrations, to self-control impulse, to convey gratification to others, to control mood in any condition, and to stop any kind of emotional forces from weakening the ability to think on any matter clearly, to keep hope alive, and to empathize [5]. As a whole, Goleman’s perspectives of emotional intelligence have the following aspects:

1. Motivation – It helps in recognizing wants and drives one’s feelings in a proper direction.
2. Self-regulation – It indicates the ability to be emotionally stable and drive one’s feelings in a positive direction.
3. Self-awareness – It is the recognition of one’s own feelings and drives the feelings to a constructive decision-making process.
4. Social skills – It represents one’s ability to control interrelationships and develop a strong leadership skill.
5. Empathy – It makes one capable of sensing others’ feelings, understand their desires and needs, and then act accordingly.

From the above definitions, it is evident that emotional intelligence has two distinct relations relating to “self” Interpersonal and Intrapersonal. The first one is purely a relation with inner self or in other words, it is an internal relation while the latter one the relationship with the others or in other words it is an expression of external relations.

In this matter, Goleman and Baron have two different opinions. Both described emotional intelligence as the capability to adapt to an environment efficiently, psychologically, socially, physically, and mentally. Baron alternatively focused on five key elements as the following ones:

1. Interpersonal ability – It is one’s capability to empathize and ability to maintain the relationships with the others.
2. Intrapersonal ability – It is one’s capability to possess clear vision, self-actualization, the ability to become independent, and ability to show self-confidence.
3. General mood – It is one’s ability to recognize own feelings and stay positive.

4. Stress management – It is the ability to keep the balance of different feelings and control such feelings.
5. Adaptability – It is the ability to be flexible in different adverse situations and ability to find solutions.

It is evident that the theorists and scholars differ in their opinions regarding emotional intelligence but they all agree on one aspect: Emotional intelligence is the ability to control own emotions and also work with another person's emotions. Positive outcomes can be expected when one can control and inspire oneself, identify with others, interpret and understand the feelings of others, and is capable to drive the feelings to achieve own goals while helping others to achieve their goals. It is rightly commented that the models of different researchers and scholars may vary but as far as emotional intelligence is concerned such varying models are complementary to each other and not contradictory [6].

II. IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN LEARNING LANGUAGES

Media has been showing an interest in different aspects of language teaching and learning aspects which has, in turn, increased the interest of common people and scholars on the this matter. This has prompted some scholars to conduct research on the relationship between emotional intelligence and its relation to learning a new language and applying it in practice [7]. Emotional intelligence can be effectively implemented in the teaching and learning of a language. Now, the most important question is how do the intelligent people perform at the language learning courses and classes? Are they better than the average learners? In any language learning process, the interaction between the instructor and student is vital where both communication and physical representation matter a lot. It is important to identify, apply, assess, and manage emotions of the learners with the help of emotional intelligence. These traits are extremely important in every human which are not just intelligence. Having high intelligent quotient (IQ) does not guarantee a successful career for an individual [5]. Plenty of examples could be placed where genius people could not perform well in learning or in a career while a person with comparatively weak IQ has better learning ability and better career. Some experts in this field even opine that it is the emotional intelligence that works for a learner, not the cognitive intelligence.

It is a fact that the concept of applying emotional intelligence is neglected in the learning processes. Learners of any language other than their native language need to have emotional intelligence and should also look for the same in the teacher and classmates. New learners need to possess a high level of persistence and acceptability for others and also for themselves. In many situations, the behavior of the teacher can instigate the students to behave rudely in the classroom which is not expected from a student. In teaching English as a foreign language or second language, the use and importance of emotional intelligence are not yet popular; however, experts have increased efforts to make it popular in English study classes.

As we discussed so far, it is evident that emotional intelligence is an inherent ability of an individual which can be improved in different methods, especially through changing environment and experience. Emotional Intelligence combines two terms “emotion” and “intelligence” which is quite logical. Emotion is viewed as a factor that is capable of making a person think and act intelligently.

The ability to understand others state of mind and consider their present emotions is the sign of an emotionally intelligent individual. Lacking this skill will make one socially and emotionally distanced from the others. As per Goleman (1995), lacking this trait will make one back seated [5].

Mayer and Salovey recommended some useful ideas for having emotional intelligence in the classroom [4]:

- a. Show feeling as an alternative to ordering a student to debar the student from misbehaving.
- b. Taking responsibility for a certain feeling or act that happens in a classroom instead of accusing someone one-sidedly.
- c. Trying to understand the reason behind a student's certain act or behavior before coming to an opinion about the student.
- d. Finding different ways of cooperation with the students instead of demanding cooperation from the students one-sidedly.
- e. Helping the students to express themselves and their feelings openly.
- f. Helping students to solve their problems through mutual cooperation.

As the language learning is completely based on communication, especially when it is happening in the classes, emotional intelligence can play an effective role in the whole process.

Undoubtedly, emotional intelligence can enhance the effectiveness of the communication process in the classroom. It is also important that the cooperation from both the students and teachers is established which is needed for getting maximum benefits from emotional intelligence. Presence of this factor can increase more interpersonal sharing of ideologies and cultural aspects.

III. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND STUDENTS

Achievement in the second or foreign language and emotional intelligence are inherently linked with each other. It is known that emotions are directly linked to attention. The latter can increase or decrease depending on the emotion which is again a prime factor in effective learning [8]. It is also found that "negativity" is a prime hindrance to the thought process when a student writes something [9]. Researchers marked in their study that positive thinking and emotions are directly linked and they together improve the learning ability and attention in the class of the students [10].

As per the research conducted by Elliot et al (2003), improved interpersonal skill can enhance the learning ability of the students [11]. Bar-On (2000) opined in his model on Social and Emotional Intelligence that emotional intelligence has several positive aspects for a student as the student can manage his emotions more efficiently as also can communicate with others with more confidence [12]. Elliot (2003) further opined that inspiration from the teacher and fellow classmates is another factor in the effective learning process [11]. Inspiration not only develops a learning habit but also develops positive attitudes towards learning. Emotional intelligence can be effective in the classroom. If the students are not performing well, the teachers can find a process to endorse emotional intelligence practices where the teachers can evaluate the students on this basis prior to the course or even when the course is underway. This will help to have a greater impact on the class teaching of the students. Although, there is no way to avoid cognitive ability of a student, emotional intelligence develops effective study environment, family support, peer support, and learning accomplishment. Emotional intelligence is worth investing in, as students with high emotional intelligence always remain in advantageous position.

According to Goleman (1995), principal emotional competencies are the very root of ethical attitudes in life. The researcher opined that introduction of emotional intelligence would open up many new avenues in the learning process enabling teachers to educate their students wholly [5]. Sucaramana (2004) investigated the relationship between different variables in the English learning process among Thai students [7]. The research showed that emotional intelligence had a direct influence on study habits, encouragement to study, efforts put in the lessons, encouragement from peers and family members, etc. Though the study mostly focuses on the emotional intelligence of the students, the same characteristic of the teachers is ignored.

IV. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND TEACHERS

Teachers need to be aware of their own emotional intelligence apart from that of the students. This characteristic of the teachers can stimulate learning in the students in many ways. Experts suggest that emotional intelligence can fill the deficiencies in the infrastructure and learning process to a great extent [10]. When the teachers use their own emotional intelligence, many issues can be solved and learning can be more effective. If the teachers are using emotional intelligence a positive atmosphere in the classroom is created that again enhances the students to increase their own emotional intelligence. For this purpose, teachers need to handle their own emotions in the social set up and rectify their own mannerisms and presentations according to the social set up. Every person possesses emotional intelligence, but a lower level of emotional intelligence in the teacher would definitely make the students use their own emotional intelligence at a minimal level. On the other hand, a teacher with high emotional intelligence would require an equally effective emotionally intelligent classroom environment. It is never possible for a teacher with low emotional intelligence to bring a dynamic teaching environment in the classroom where the students could control their own feelings or talk with the teacher regarding their problem freely.

Not only the students should know their learning ability the teachers should also know the abilities of individual students in the class. This is possible in an efficient way if the teachers have their emotional intelligence active [5]. It is found that the students with high emotional intelligence learn faster and better than the other students in the class.

Thus, it is important for the teachers to understand the body language and signs the students in the class present for developing more interactive and positive learning experience. Teachers also need to know the process of handling difficult students through emotional intelligence. Improvement in the students' behavior is possible by understanding them more closely which the emotional intelligence provides.

V. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND AFFECTIVE FACTORS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Marquez, Martin and Bracket (2006) had conducted the experiment to search the connection between educational achievements and cognitive intellect or quotient [13]. It was evident that cognitive intellect or quotient encouraged and supported the educational achievements in a particular situation, and it was evident for pupils of higher classes. From this research, it was also demonstrated that a healthy connection exists between cognitive and the educational as well as social construction period of teenage students.

Zarafshan and Ardeshiri (2012) explored the sphere of aftermaths or impacts of cognitive intellect and utilization of language acquiring planning with EFL pupils in Iran. From their research, the aspects of self-knowledge or awareness, emotive as well as communal cognizance or learning techniques and emotional intellect played important roles in English language fluency and aptitude [14].

Pishghadam (2009) investigated the vitality of cognitive intellect or quotient with respect to language knowing skill or aptitude [15]. He made a comparative study of cognitive intellect with the marks of pupils in the categories of language aptitude, such as, to read, write, talk and hear along with their grades. As per the results and the suggestions, a high grade of the emotional quotient is marked as an important indicator of good marks. It's also connected to excellent grades in linguistics knowledge and proficiency which are mostly based on EQ aspects: to read (depending upon handling pressure, overall mental condition and adaptation features), to hear (intercommunication proficiency and taking care of pressure and stressful situations), to talk (associated with intra- as well as intercommunication proficiency) and lastly to write (associated with accommodating and adjusting aspect along with handling pressure).

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusion

Effective education system could be brought through reciprocal relationships and effective techniques. Such positive aspects are learned and could be passed on to the students who will pass on the knowledge to the classmates, peers, family members, and juniors. A teacher with lower emotional intelligence will not be able to improve emotional intelligence of the students whom he or she is teaching and supervising.

So, it is necessary that the emotional intelligence should be developed and implemented among the students over developing an overall cozy, positive, cooperative teacher-student relationship. In the course curriculums, emotional skill management needs to be given more focus. Various related aspects of the problem-solving ability, self-management, and target oriented learning, reciprocal learning, etc. should be added in the courses and teachers should be trained accordingly. Students can make desired progress if the teachers can spot their issues like inability to adjust to the environment; inability follows the classes, communication problem, shyness, aggressiveness, or any other negative traits. Teachers with emotional intelligence in action could easily empathize with them and assess the root cause of the problems. Through the application of emotional intelligence, a healthy and effective learning environment can be created.

B. Recommendations

Developing self-awareness different types of activities can improve learner's self-awareness and foster better understanding of self. These activities possibly include vocabulary related to feelings and emotions, role plays and dialogues, working on a reading text and character analysis related to the text. The activities which can facilitate development of self-awareness also include paragraph and essay writing, personal descriptions and debates or talks where individuals express their point of view on a controversial topic.

C. Developing self-regulation

Developing self-control or determination can be done with the help of different actions. Out of those, actions, where teams or problem resolving approaches are involved, can work in favor of the student's

involvement in particular activities. Role playing activity, such as team leader or monitor where they're given some kind of duties can augment the priority-deciding, loyalty and personal ethics development features among them. Useful circumstances are produced to implement own intelligence and skill to solve it and these can be best for learning pragmatic approach and also for building friendly and cooperative attitude towards other team associates.

D. Developing motivation

There are several coaching technologies and methodologies to nurture and grow a student's internal and external aspiration. Choosing interesting activities and subjects or assignments as per their choices, focusing and considering student's individual aims, individualizing the subjects and lessons as well as making the students able to recognize with particular reference and subjects are useful for increasing the motivational and cognitive intellect.

E. Developing empathy

For cultivating the empathetic nature and this aspect of EQ in case of language acquiring or during formal academic setup, there are different tasks. Morality based subjects or case studies where individual conflict or confusion, arguments and dialogue, character part playing exist along with study and interpretation of protagonist and other characters of fables and tales are helpful for nurturing the compassion and empathetic nature among language students to elevate the comprehensive idea about others.

F. Developing social skills

Interpersonal proficiency, ability to communicate with other people as well as describing/ showing accurate attitudes with respect to particular circumstances is included in this point. In addition to roleplaying activity, there are certain other methods as well. Like giving presentations as well as catering response to other's demonstrations is helpful to understand or gather knowledge and perform analytically in a particular field or subject. Additionally, it's helpful to understand accurate manifestation, subject idea, describing methodology and gesture or actions which are associated with this topic. Practicing tasks like mock employment interview session, small employee meet-up, or conference on a resolution of a dispute between two persons boost them to know communication proficiency along with the EQ. As inference, it can be said that the EQ or emotional quotient is an important feature for personal as well as professional growth. Teachers, instructors, and students must know about the emotional intelligence or quotient so that it can be cultivated and elevated through different methodologies and language learning activities.

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