Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics (IJAL), Vol. 16, No. 1, March 2013, 1-24

Emotional Intelligence and SLA: The Case of Interlanguage Pragmatic Competence

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Received 30 October 2012; revised 29 January 2013; accepted 12 February 2013

Abstract

The development of different sub-competences of second/foreign language is affected by a variety of cognitive, personal, and social factors (Ellis, 1994). As for personal factors, a wide range of emotional variables have been incorporated into second language acquisition (SLA) studies; however, emotional intelligence (EQ) is relatively new to this domain (Pishghadam, 2009). Given that EQ seems to affect EFL learners' interlanguage pragmatic competence (ILP) development due to the face-threatening nature of some of the speech acts involved and in an attempt to explore the nature of the tentative interrelationship, the researcher administered the Bar-On EQ-i (1996) questionnaire as an EQ measure, two ILP competence tests, and a TOEFL test to 52 Iranian EFL majors. The analyses results did not reveal any significant correlation between EQ, ILP competence and general English proficiency despite the evident strong correlation between the ILP and general English proficiency. Furthermore, the results did not feature EQ as an effective predictor of EFL learners' general English proficiency and ILP competence development level. The findings imply that EQ as a seemingly construct irrelevant factor to EFL learners' both foreign language proficiency and ILP development might not be rightly considered as an effective personal variable in EFL educational contexts.

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Keywords: Emotional intelligence; Foreign language proficiency; Interlanguage Pragmatic (ILP) competence; EFL; Iran

Introduction

Human cognition was mainly operationalized as a concept devoid of emotion and measured through some tests of intelligence that included only high-level mental abilities like abstract reasoning (Sternberg, 1997). This point is one of the reasons why the early designers of intelligence tests focused exclusively on cognitive abilities such as memory and problem solving (for example Binet, 1905).

Although a relatively long time has passed from the hey days of such cognitive studies, the extensive amount of current research on memory and problem solving indicates that the focus of present general education system is still on cognitive and rational aspects and that little attention has been paid to the grave contribution of the emotional mind (Low & Nelson, 2004). Second or foreign language education as a part of general education system has not been an exception to this trend of studies as it has prioritized cognitive aspects of learning over emotional ones despite the increasing emphasis of the experts on the point that language and language learning are influenced by some factors other than purely cognitive or intelligence based variables (Gardner, 1993). Likewise, Ellis (1994) contends that there are many variables including emotional factors that influence language development in general and second or foreign language learning in particular. Among such emotional factors which might constrain or enhance second or foreign language learning, emotional intelligence is a salient and rather recently introduced one.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ / EI) is generally concerned with the intelligent use of emotions and use of the power or information contained in emotion to make effective decisions (Ciarrochi & Mayer, 2007). Goleman (1995, p. 34) as a prominent researcher of EQ defines it as "abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustration, to control impulses and delay gratification, to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swapping the ability to think, to emphasize and to hope" and believes that eighty percent of the variance among people in various forms of success that is unaccounted for by Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests can be accounted for by the constituting elements of emotional intelligence.

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Furthermore, Goleman (1995) believes that EQ can be as much powerful and at times more powerful than IQ in predicting success in various life challenges. This belief is confirmed by many studies that have underscored the importance of emotional intelligence in different aspects of life (for example, Carmeli, 2003; Fox & Spector, 2000; Petrides, Fredrickson & Furham, 2004; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Shuttes, Schuetplez, & Malouff, 2001) and more specifically its positive relation with the academic achievements, success or progress (Dabrowski & Piechowski, 2001; Cangelosi & Peterson, 1998; Mehrabian, 2000).

A shallow review of the current research trends in this area suggests that increasing attention is being paid to the effect of EQ on academic success and achievement in general education (Elias, Harriet, & Cynthia, 2003) or the relation pattern between the EQ and academic achievement; however, not much attention has been paid to either second or foreign language learning and the related educational issues (Brackett & Katalak, 2007) or the different aspects of second language competence development. This condition stands in stark contrast to Goleman's (2001) idea that EQ serves both internal mechanisms and external environment of the language learning process, and it necessitates further studies on the role of EQ in second or foreign language learning or their relationship.

Against this backdrop however, only few studies are carried out in second or foreign language education context and have reported yet inconclusive results, some of which, confirming Goleman (2001), point to a positive relation pattern between EQ and second or foreign language development as well as second language general proficiency (for example Pishghadam, 2009; Rouhani, 2004).

On the other hand, language competence, as one of the constitutive components of communicative language ability, is only partially represented through the general language proficiency of the interlocutors. It includes a variety of other sub-competences like organizational and pragmatic competences (Bachman, 1990), with each one including various componential elements and skills that contribute to the overarching language competence. Pragmatic competence as one of such constructive subcomponents of the general language proficiency is of great cross-cultural and cross-linguistic variation and its development in second or foreign language learning contexts might be affected by not only cognitive but also emotional and cultural factors.

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Furthermore, it needs to be mentioned that although the relationship between the development of some of the componential elements of language proficiency and EQ as an emotional measure has been investigated in a few studies, no study has explored the effect or the relation pattern of emotional intelligence on or with second or foreign language learners' pragmatic competence development. The significance of such studies is underscored considering the importance of the development of pragmatic competence for successful L2 learning and use which has been strongly emphasized in recent years, as many researchers and practitioners believe that "besides acquiring elements of the target language, students must be able to function appropriately within the total meaning system of that language" (Kreutel, 2007, p.11).

Second or foreign language pragmatic competence studies have mostly taken either cross-cultural or Interlanguage Pragmatic (ILP) perspectives. Cross-cultural pragmatic studies adopt a sociolinguistic perspective and focus on the comparison of pragmatic comprehension and production of speakers with different cultural backgrounds, but ILP studies mainly adopt a developmental perspective and focus on the study of second or foreign language learners' pragmatic development through the analysis of the way language learners acquire and use pragmatic competence in their linguistic production and comprehension (Cenoz, 2007, as cited in Khatib & Ahmadi Safa, 2011). Moreover, the factors which might enhance or impede ILP development including personal attributes such as age, motivation, gender, second language proficiency level, anxiety , stress , … and educational variables such as the role of instruction, input material, the methodology of instruction (explicit or implicit), … have been amply explored, while the role of the newly introduced emotional intelligence is yet to be studied.

Finally, the necessity of the incorporation of EQ in ILP studies is underscored by Saville-Troike (1996, p.19) who holds that in order to approximate native speakers' (NS) level of pragmatic competence, a second or foreign language learner needs to develop interaction skills: knowing not only what to say but how and when to say it, what nonverbal behaviors are appropriate for them to use in various contexts in relation to whom they are speaking with, what routines they should use for turn taking in conversation and how to perform and comprehend speech acts such as requesting or apologizing.

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Considering the conditions Saville-Troike mentions for successful pragmatic competence development in the light of Goleman's (1995) definition for EQ as the abilities to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustration, control impulses and delay gratification, regulate one's moods and keep distress from swapping the ability to think, emphasize and to hope, and the complimentary points he made about how influential EQ might be for the success of people in different life endeavors including language learning, the researcher decided to primarily investigate the relationship between the EQ and ILP competence development of the English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Furthermore, as a second purpose of the study, the researcher tried to explore whether EQ level of the EFL learners can be a predictor of their general English proficiency and ILP competence level.

A Brief Literature Review

Thorndike (1920, as cited in Pishghadam, 2009) was the first psychologist to add a new dimension to intelligence when he hypothesized that true intelligence is composed of not only an academic component but also of emotional and social components (Pishghadam, 2009). However, it was no sooner than the 1990s that the psychological research emphasis turned the focus to the interaction of emotion and thought and as a consequence, the concept of emotional intelligence was born (Grewal & Salovey, 2005). The possibility of having different new intelligences had been partially justified formerly when Gardner (1983) advanced a controversial theory of intelligence, i.e. multiple intelligences, that questioned the horizontal and traditional approach to general intelligence and introduced seven intelligences including intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences. The multiplicity of intelligences highlighted the probability of introduction of other intelligences like emotional intelligence which did not take longer than only seven years to be introduced.

Since 1990, when the concept of emotional intelligence was introduced for the first time, two general models of EQ have been competing with one another: the ability model and the mixed approaches to emotional intelligence. Salovey and Mayer (1990) were the first to pose an ability model of EQ. They used a two tier approach in their model. First, they spoke of the general processing of emotional information and next they tried to specify the skills involved in the processing of the emotional information. Expanding the model, Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (1999) defined emotional intelligence as an "ability to recognize the meaning of emotions and their relationships, reason and problem–solve on the basis of them,

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and the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion related feelings, understand the information of those emotions and manage them" (Mayer et al., 1999, as cited in Rouhani, 2004, p. 42).

The mixed approach to emotional intelligence has been the second perspective towards emotional intelligence. Goleman (1995) and Cooper (1996, 1997) explicitly mixed the ability to understand and process emotion with other aspects of personality or skills. This mixture brought about the mixed approaches to emotional intelligence. Goleman (1995) disintegrated the EQ concept into the five constituents of a) knowing one's emotions b) managing emotion c) motivating oneself d) recognizing emotions in others and e) handling relationships. In a comparatively similar way, Cooper (1996, 1997) considers emotional intelligence as a mix of mental and non-mental abilities. Similar to Goleman (1995), he divided EQ into five general attributes in a measure called EQ map (Rouhani, 2004).

As Mayer (2001) maintains, mixed approaches to emotional intelligence stand for a stronger predictive power of success while the first model, i.e., ability model, might be able to only offer potentialities.

Researchers have been using several instruments to assess emotional intelligence and its different dimensions. These instruments include Bar-On EQ-i, (Emotional Intelligence Inventory), MSCEIT (Mayor, Salovey, and Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test), MEIS (Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale), EQ Map, the ability test of SASQ by Seligman, and the self report measure of Shutte et al. (Chermiss, 2009, as cited in Shahmohamadi & Hasanzadeh, 2011).

As the present study utilizes the Bar-On EQ-i measure, a brief description of this measure is necessary. Bar-On (1996) and Bar-On and Parker (2000) define EQ/ EI as a collection of emotional and social knowledge and skills. For Bar-On, EI includes a list of non-cognitive skills which increases one's success in life. His model includes five main domains and fifteen sub-domains. The main domains are:

1. Intrapersonal Skills Domain including Self-Regard, Emotional Self-Awareness, Assertiveness, Independence, and Self Actualization.
2. Interpersonal Skills Domain including Empathy, Social Responsibility and Interpersonal Relationships.
3. Adaptability Domain including Reality Testing, Flexibility, and Problem Solving.

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4. Stress Management Skills Domain including Stress Tolerance, and Impulse Control.
5. General Mood Domain including Optimism and Happiness.

As stated in the previous part, emotional intelligence has inspired research in many fields. Stottlemayer (2002) investigated the EQ and its relation to academic achievement of 200 students in Texas and found that EQ skills were significant predictors of academic achievement.

Besharat, Shalchi and Shamsipoor (2006) studied the impact of EQ/EI on mental health and academic success of 220 students in Iran. The authors found a negative correlation between EI and psychological stress and a positive one for EI and Academic success. In a rather large scale study Pishghadam (2009) examined the relationship between EQ and foreign language learning success among 528 university students at four universities in Tehran. He tried to match emotional intelligence inventory (EQ-i) data with the students' academic records, scores in reading, listening, speaking and writing. He reported that predicting second language learning success from emotional intelligence variables produced divergent results, depending on how the variables were operationalized. In another study, Rouhani (2004) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence, foreign language anxiety, and empathy on a sample of 70 Iranian EFL undergraduate students. The results revealed that the promotion of emotions might play positive role in L2 Learning.

Concerning the main objective of the present study, i.e., the relation between EQ and ILP development of EFL learners, no study has even minimally considered the relationship or the causal effects of the two variables with or on each other. Hence, against this backdrop, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Is there any significant relationship between the EFL learners' EQ level and their ILP competence?
2. Is there any significant difference in the EFL learners' ILP competence relation pattern with each one of the constructive components of EQ?
3. Is there any significant relationship between the EFL learners' EQ level and their general English proficiency?
4. Is there any significant difference in the relation pattern of male and female EFL learners' general English proficiency and ILP competence with their EQ? In other words, does gender have a significantly distinguishing effect

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on the relationship between general English proficiency, ILP competence and EQ level?

5. Is ILP competence development and general English Proficiency level of the EFL learners predictable based on their EQ level?

For each one of the stated research questions a null hypothesis was assumed.

Method

Participants

The participants of the study were 52 EFL majors at Bu Ali Sina university of Hamedan, Iran. The sample included 17 male (32.7%) and 35 female (67.3%) students. From this number, 22 were senior and 30 were freshmen. They were from different vernacular first language backgrounds and the age range of the participants was 18 to 24. Table 1 presents the number, gender and the educational level of the participants of the study.

Table 1
Study sample's demographic information

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Group	Freshman	12	18	30
	Senior	5	17	22
Total		17	35	52

Instruments

The researcher used three instruments in this study:

General English proficiency measure: The first instrument was an abridged form of a paper and pencil sample TOEFL test taken from Sharpe (2004) that was used as a measure of the participants' general English proficiency level. It included 40 multiple choice grammar and vocabulary and 50 reading comprehension test items. Due to practicality considerations the participants were not given the listening part of the test. The estimated Cronbach a reliability index of the abridged test was 0.81 (a = 0.81).

EQ questionnaire: The second instrument was Bar-On (1996) Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) that was used as one of the standardized, highly reliable (a = 0.96) and validated measures of emotional intelligence (Dawda & Hart, 2000).

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The questionnaire includes 90 six point Likert scale items and has operationally defined the emotional intelligence construct to include 15 related components of Emotional self-Awareness(ES), Assertiveness(AS), Self Regard(SR), Self-actualization(SA), Independence(In), Empathy(EM), Social–Responsibility(RE), Interpersonal Relationship(IR), Reality Testing (RT), Flexibility (FL), Problem Solving (PS), Stress Tolerance(ST), Impulse Control(IC), Optimism(OP), and Happiness(HA).

ILP measure: As a measure of the EFL learners' Interlanguage Pragmatic Competence (ILP), the researcher adopted a researcher made and validated pragmatic competence test (Ahmadi Safa, 2011; Khatib & Ahmadi Safa, 2011) which includes 12 Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) and 12 Multiple choice Discourse Completion Task (MDCT) test items. The 12 scenarios in the two DCT tests were to measure the EFL learners' ability in the production and recognition of both pragmalinguistic and socio-pragmatically appropriate forms for the realization of the three speech acts of request, apology and complaint, each at four levels of formality and familiarity.

Data Collection Procedure

The participants of the two freshman and senior groups took the three tests of TOEFL, ILP (WDCT and MDCT), and Bar-On EQ-i in turn over a period of about four weeks. The TOEFL was the first test the subjects of both groups took separately in a single 70 minute session at the first week of the study period. Next, each one of the two groups took the pragmatic WDCT test in a single session on the second week following the TOEFL test and before the administration of the MDCT test. The order of the administration of the ILP tests was so designed to maximally neutralize the potential memory and test effect of the MDCT test on the participants' WDCT test taking. The participants' responses to the WDCT test scenarios were scored by two English native speakers using a four level rating scale (3= most appropriate, 2= appropriate, 1= least appropriate, 0 = not appropriate) and the average score of the two ratings was considered as the participant's score on the WDCT test. The MDCT test was given to the two groups on the third week of the study in two separate 30 minute sessions. Finally, the subjects took the Bar-On EQ-i emotional intelligence questionnaire in the fourth week of the study. Since the number of the items of the questionnaire was rather large (90 items), some of the subjects took the questionnaire home to do in their free time and returned it within the same week.

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Results

In order to answer the research questions and test the assumed hypotheses the statistical procedures of correlation analysis, MANOVA and regression analysis were run on the data.

The first research question sought to reveal the relation pattern between the participants' ILP competence and their emotional intelligence level. To answer this question, a Pearson product moment correlation analysis was run on the sum of the participants' performances in the WDCT and MDCT tests as their ILP competence and their total EQ-i index. Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistical information of the participants' performances in the two tests.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of ILP and EQ tests

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
ILP tests	30.38	6.22	52
EQ	334.55	38.99	52

The mean score for the sum of the two WDCT and MDCT test performance of the 52 participants was M= 30.38 and the average score for the EQ questionnaire was M= 334.55.

To see if any relation pattern could be found between the two test performances of the groups, Pearson correlation analysis was run and the obtained results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlations between ILP and EQ

		ILP	EQ
ILP	Pearson Correlation	1	.16
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.24
	N	52	52
EQ	Pearson Correlation	.16	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.24	
	N	52	52

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As is evident in Table 3, the correlation pattern between the two variables is shown to be r = 0.16 and as the p= .24> 0.05, it is found to be insignificant. Hence the null hypothesis for the first research question which assumed not a strong relation between the two variables is confirmed as the size of the found relationship is negligible. The second research question was to delve into the depth of the emotional intelligence construct to investigate the relation pattern between the constructive components of emotional intelligence and the Interlanguage Pragmatic competence. The results of the correlation analyses showed a striking consistency with the results obtained for the first question. Table 4 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the participants' performance in the fifteen constructive components of EQ and the ILP tests.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics of ILP and EQ variables

	Mean	SD	N
ILP	30.38	6.22	52
Happiness	23.73	4.53	52
Problem Solving	22.82	2.78	52
Independence	22.05	3.50	52
Stress Tolerance	19.67	4.17	52
Self Actualization	23.13	4.12	52
Self Awareness	21.86	4.00	52
Reality Testing	20.57	3.79	52
Interpersonal Relations	23.63	3.68	52
Optimism	23.32	3.74	52
Self Regard	24.09	3.59	52
Impulse Control	19.50	5.52	52
Flexibility	20.38	3.76	52
Social Responsibility	24.51	2.84	52
Empathy	25.57	3.30	52
Assertiveness	20.82	3.49	52

The correlation analysis of the subjects' ILP tests results and the constructive components of the emotional intelligence revealed no significant correlation pattern between any one of the 15 constructive components and the interlanguage pragmatic competence. Table 5 summarizes the obtained results for this analysis.

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Table 5
Correlations between ILP and constructive EQ variables

		HP	PR	ID	ST	SA	SeA	RT	IPR	OP	SR	IC	FL	SoR	EM	As
ILP	Pearson Correlation	.18	.07	.06	.18	.04	.04	.04	.08	.06	.24	.09	.08	.01	.06	.05
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.19	.59	.66	.17	.76	.77	.75	.55	.64	.08	.50	.57	.90	.64	.69
	N	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52

As shown above, the interlanguage pragmatic competence is revealed not to be related with any one of the 15 constructive components of EQ. Furthermore, as the relation pattern between each one of the EQ components and the ILP test is shown not to be statistically significant, the researcher is compelled to assume that the relation patterns between ILP and the 15 constructive components are not significantly different from each other and as a result the second research question's null hypothesis is also confirmed.

The third research question sought to find out if there was any significant relationship between the EFL learners' EQ level and their general English proficiency. Table 6 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the participants' performances on these two tests.

Table 6
Descriptive statistics of EQ and general proficiency

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
EQ	334.55	38.99	52
General Proficiency	54.13	14.25	52

The results of the correlation analysis between the EFL learners' emotional intelligence and their general English proficiency (Table 7) reveals that, contrary to the researcher's expectation, there was no significant correlation between the two variables.

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Table 7
Correlation between EQ and general English proficiency

		G.P	EQ
G.P	Pearson Correlation	1	.01
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.94
	N	52	52
EQ	Pearson Correlation	.01	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.94	
	N	52	52

The analysis reveals a very negligible relationship (r= 0.01, p=0.94 >0.05) between the two variables and hence it enables the researcher to confirm the third null hypothesis of the study that assumed no relationship between the general English proficiency and EQ.

The fourth research question looks at the effect of gender on the afore-mentioned correlation patterns and seeks to see if there is any significant difference in the relation pattern of the male and female participants' general English proficiency, ILP competence and their EQ test results.

In order to answer this research question, correlation analyses were run on the three tests separately for each gender type. Moreover, the male and female subjects' performances on the three tests were compared through MANOVA. Table 8 summarizes the descriptive statistics of male and female subjects' performances in the three tests.

Table 8
Gender wise descriptive statistics of the three tests

	Gender	N	Mean	SD
GP	Male	17	59.35	14.42
	Female	35	51.60	13.66
ILP	Male	17	31.17	6.82
	Female	35	30.00	5.97
EQ	Male	17	334.76	27.80
	Female	35	334.45	43.77

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As the mean scores column in Table 8 reveals, the male and female subjects' performances on the general English proficiency and ILP tests are rather different while the difference on the EQ test is quite minimal. To statistically examine these differences, the two genders' mean scores on each one of the three tests were compared using MANOVA statistical procedure. The analysis data are summarized in Table 9 below.

Table 9

Multivairate analysis of variances for the three tests results of male/female participants

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects							
Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	EQ	5124527.69	1	5124527.6	3304.5	.00	.98
	GP	140861.16	1	140861.1	727.5	.00	.93
	ILP	42823.52	1	42823.5	1093.2	.00	.95
Gender	EQ	1.08	1	1.08	.00	**.97**	.00
	GP	687.77	1	687.7	3.55	**.06**	.06
	ILP	15.83	1	15.83	.40	**.52**	.00

As evident in the Significance column (Table 9), the test performances of the two genders in none of the three tests were significantly different from each other in spite of the apparent distinction reported above in the descriptive statistics table (Table 8).

The separate correlation analyses of both gender participants' test performances presented a set of results which were both consistent with the previous findings and revealing in some new aspects. Table 10 summarizes the results of three correlation analyses for the two genders.

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Table 10
Correlations among the two genders' three tests

		EQ		ILP	
GP	Male	P. Correlation	0.04	P. Correlation	0.52*
		Sig. (2-tail)	0.86	Sig. (2-tail)	0.02
	Female	P. Correlation	-0.01	P. Correlation	0.34*
		Sig. (2-tail)	0.99	Sig. (2-tail)	0.04
ILP	Male	P. Correlation	0.34		
		Sig. (2-tail)	0.17		
	Female	P. Correlation	0.11		
		Sig. (2-tail)	0.52		

As Table 10 presents, there was no distinctive correlation difference in the male and female participants' general English proficiency and their EQ level. Moreover, ILP test performances of the two genders were not differentially correlated with their emotional intelligence level; however, significant correlation is found for the both genders' performances in the general English proficiency and interlanguage pragmatic test. The obtained results suggests that gender does not play a decisive and distinguishing role in the EFL learners' ILP, general English proficiency and EQ correlation pattern, hence the fourth null hypothesis of the study is verified as well.

Finally in order to see if the EQ can predict the EFL learners' general English proficiency and ILP competences, regression analyses were run on the data. Table 11 shows the results of the analysis.

Table 11
Regression model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.165[a]	**.027**	.008	6.197
a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Intl				
b. Dependent Variable: Pragm Com				

As Table 11 represents the results of the standard regression analysis, the reported R Square value was equal to 0.027 (*R2* = 0.027) and the Adjusted R

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Squared was even less (0.008). This means that the emotional intelligence has got only two percent predictive power for the prediction of the pragmatic competence level of the EFL learners. The results achieved from coefficients analysis (Table 12) proved the regression coefficient to be (ß= 0.165) which is quite negligible. To make sure the regression analysis was done on a solid ground and the related assumptions of homogeneity of the variances, normality of the data, linearity and multicolinearity were met, the following analyses were run. The resulted residual statistics table of the regression analysis was checked where the Std. Residual range was found to be between -2.204 and 1.745, and as the range is within the range of -3 and 3, the data distribution was considered to be normal. On the other hand, the resulted Variance Inflation Factor (VIF= 1.0, 1< 5) revealed that the explanatory variable (EQ) was not cointerrelated with the other variables and hence the multicolinearity assumption was not violated (Table 12). The examination of the scatter plots also revealed no curvature in the data distribution and hence linearity assumption was met as well. The last assumption of regression analysis i.e., the homogeneity of variances, was also tested through the plot of studentized residuals against fitted values which revealed a cloud of randomly scattered data and verified the variances as homogeneous.

Table 12

Coefficients analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standard Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
l(Constant)	21.5	7.49		2.88	.006					
Emotional Intl	.026	.022	**.165**	1.18	.243	.165	.165	.165	1.00	**1.00**
a. Dependent Variable: Pragm Com										

Similarly, based on the standard regression analysis summarized in Table 13, the general English proficiency of the participants was found not to be predictable based on their EQ level either.

The results of this analysis (Table13) revealed an R square of 0.00 (*R2* = 0.00) and regression coefficient (Table 14) of 0.010 (ß= .010).This means that EQ seems to be of no predictive power for the EFL learners' general English proficiency.

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Table 13
Regression model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.010[a]	.000	-.020	14.39
a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Intl				
b. Dependent Variable: Genrl Prof				

To make sure the analysis had been on a sound basis, the related assumptions of the regression analysis were tested. To test linearity assumption, the scatter plots were examined and no distinctive curvature was observed. On the other hand, the test of multicolinearity assumption (Table 14) revealed a VIF index of 1.000 (VIF= 1.0 < 5). To test normality assumption, the obtained residuals statistics table was checked and the Std. Residuals was found to be between -2.250 and 1.923 and as it did not exceed the extremes of -/+ 3 , the data was deemed to be normal. Finally to test the homogeneity of variances, the plotted studentized residuals against fitted values were checked and a cloud of randomly scattered data was found which means the last assumption of the regression analysis was met too.

Table 14
Coefficients analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standard Coefficient	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1(Constant	52.86	17.41		3.03	.004					
EQ	.004	.052	**.010**	.073	.942	.010	.010	.010	1.000	**1.00**
a. Dependent Variable: Genrl Prof										

Discussion

It is stated earlier that language and language learning are believed to be influenced by some factors other than purely cognitive or intelligence based ones (Gardner, 1993). This belief basically justifies the increasing attention the researchers in the field of general education pay to the role of non-cognitive variables in academic

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success and achievement rates (Elias et al., 2003). As a primarily non-cognitive but mainly affective variable, EQ was reported to have a positive relation with the academic achievements, success or progress (Stottlemayer, 2002; Besharat et al., 2006).

As an example, Stottlemayer (2002) investigated the EQ and it's relation to academic achievement of 200 students in Texas and found that EQ skills were significant predictors of academic achievement. Besharat et al. (2006) incorporated emotional intelligence in to the field of psychology and studied the impact of EQ/EI on mental health and academic success of 220 students in Iran and found a negative correlation between EI and psychological stress and a positive one for EI and academic success.

Contrary to the great number of the studies on the relationship between EQ and academic success or achievement, and despite Goleman (2001) who states that EQ serves both internal mechanisms and external environment in the process of language learning, only few studies have considered the relation pattern between EQ and Language development variables, second or foreign language learning and the related educational/ contextual variables (Brackett & Katalak, 2007). Even the few studies that are carried out in second or foreign language education context have not been able to clarify the relation pattern between the EQ and second or foreign language development variables as inconsistent and contradictory results have been reported.

Some studies point to a positive relation pattern between EQ and both second and foreign language development and second language general proficiency (for example, Atac et al., 2010; Pishghadam, 2009; Rouhani, 2004). Rouhani (2004) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence, foreign language anxiety and empathy and concluded that the promotion of emotions might play a positive role in L2 Learning. In a rather similar vein, Atac et al. (2010) referring to many quantitative findings that indicate there is a significant relationship between academic achievement and emotional intelligence skills, aimed at exploring the impact of social intelligence and emotional intelligence on language learning and finally reported a strong relationship among EQ, social intelligence, and language learning.

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On the other hand, other studies (Pishghadam, 2009; Shahmohamadi & Hasanzadeh, 2011) have reported divergent or no relationship between the EQ and second or foreign language variables. In a rather large scale study, Pishghadam (2009) examined the relationship between EQ and foreign language learning success. He tried to match emotional intelligence inventory (EQ-i) data with the students' academic records, scores in reading, listening, speaking, and writing and concluded that predicting second language learning success from emotional intelligence variables produced divergent results, depending on how the variables were operationalized. Contrary to Atac et al. and Pishghadam, Shahmohammadi and Hasanzadeh (2011) in a study which aimed to assess the predictive power of emotional intelligence for the Iranian EFL learners' achievement revealed no relationship between total emotional intelligence and language achievement; however, some of the subcomponents of EI including Independence, Self assertion, and Optimism had meaningful relationships with language achievement. The observed inconsistency in the results of the studies and the unclear status of the relationship between emotional intelligence and language learning success or progress are heightened when the results of the present study are considered. The EFL learners' general English proficiency is found not to be related with their EQ level and the emotional intelligence was not found to be able to predict the general English proficiency of the participants. While the findings are in complete consistency with what Shahmohammadi and Hassanzadeh (2011) reported concerning the predictive power of EQ and a partial consistency with Shahmohammadi and Hassanzadeh (2011), Pishghadam (2009), and Besharat et al. (2006) concerning the relationship between the EQ and its constructive components with general proficiency, the results of this study are strongly inconsistent with Atac et al. (2010), Rouhani (2004), Stottlemayer (2002) as they reported a positive relationship between the two intended variables. While the necessity of further studies on the issue is quite strongly felt as a result of such inconclusive results, the inconsistency of the findings of the present and previous studies suggests that there might be other intervening and contextual factors within the relationship pattern of EQ and second or foreign language learning success.

On the other hand, and while no other study was found to have embarked on a similar endeavor, this study tried to delve into one of the most social aspects of second or foreign language use, i.e., pragmatic competence, and its relation with EQ as a human trait in charge of intelligent use of emotions and contained power or information to make effective decisions (Goleman, 1995; Ciarrochi & Mayer,

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2007) in the face of frustrations the face threatening acts of request, complaint and apology might bring about. Contrary to the researcher's expectation, the obtained results strongly highlighted the lack of any relationship between the interlanguage pragmatic competence and the EQ level of the participants. The obtained results confirmed that interlanguage pragmatic competence level of the participants as it was operationalized through two sets of discourse completion tasks of three face threatening speech acts was not related in any way to their emotional intelligence level. To further explore the relation pattern between the variables, the components of EQ were matched against the ILP tests and surprisingly none of the EQ components were found to be correlated with the ILP test measures. The obtained results further underscore the internal validity of the Emotional intelligence test as all of its constitutive components were strongly correlated with each other but no correlation was found between either one of the 15 constructive components of EQ and the ILP competence. Furthermore, as it was expected based on the correlation results, the ILP competence level was not shown to be predictable based on the EQ variable. The lack of any correlation between the interlanguage pragmatic competence and the emotional intelligence (both the total index and the 15 components) plus the lack of predictability of ILP based on EQ level attests to the independent nature of the two variables, i.e. EQ and ILP, and questions the reliability of Goleman's (2001) statement that EQ is to serve both internal mechanisms and external environment in the process of language learning.

Contrary to the claimed construct irrelevance of EQ to second or foreign language development and specifically ILP development of the EFL learners, the significant correlation index reported for both male and female participants' general language proficiency and their ILP competence level indicates that they both are governed by the same underlying competence. This is a point which endorses the researcher's previous studies results (Ahmadi Safa, 2011; Ahmadi Safa & Mahmoodi, 2012; Khatib & Ahmadi Safa, 2011) in that they proved ILP and general language proficiency as two closely related subcomponents of second or foreign language competence but the exclusive contribution of the present study is the finding that the overarching foreign language competence including general language proficiency and interlanguage pragmatic competence seems not to be related with the emotional intelligence construct.

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Conclusion

The research findings suggest that, although yet premature to state definitively, no relationship seems to exist between the EQ and interlanguage pragmatic competence of the EFL learners and the two variables are quite independent from each other. In addition, the relationship between EQ and foreign Language general proficiency seems not to be a strongly tenable relation and it is in need of further inquiries. Moreover, the two variables', i.e., ILP and the general English proficiency, relation pattern with EQ is not constrained or affected by the gender variable of the EFL learners. Furthermore, consistent with the findings of the previous studies of the researcher pragmatic competence and general language proficiency are found to be interrelated.

The research findings indicate that emotional intelligence level of the EFL learners as an affective and social learner trait should not be considered as a determining or predictive factor for the foreign language learners' success or achievement in their language learning in general and pragmatic development in particular. A high level of emotional intelligence might not guarantee the foreign language learners' excellence in their foreign language learning and optimum use of the foreign language pragmalinguistic forms in real situations and consistent with the related socio-pragmatic norms.

Finally, as the findings of the study are further adding to the uncertainties of the field, they need to be considered cautiously and more studies are needed to further clarify the issue and prove or disprove the reported results. The interested readers are recommended to incorporate different aspects of ILP competence like other speech acts, alternative modes of ILP competence assessment, and alternative measures of emotional intelligence for their further studies.

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