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The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and the Choice of Reading Strategies of Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract
The major aim of this study was to determine the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' emotional intelligence and their choice of reading strategies. To this end, a total of 126 participants were chosen from female intermediate and advanced EFL learners of Kish Language Institute in Mashhad and MA students at Hakim Sabzevari University majoring in TEFL in Sabzevar, Iran. A series of instruments were used to obtain the related data including the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP, 1979), Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (Bar-On EQ-i, 1997) and Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL, 1990). Both structured reading strategy and EI interviews were conducted to gain more insights on learners' use of strategies, reading habits, and their emotional capabilities. It was found that there was a positive significant correlation between total EI and the frequency of strategies used by Iranian EFL learners. Total EI also correlated significantly with the English language proficiency of learners. Subsequent data analysis via regression revealed that total EI is the significant predictor of metacognitive and affective strategies. The results of the interviews were also used to support and complement the results obtained through the quantitative instruments.
Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Iranian EFL learners, Reading strategies

1. Introduction

Since the last two decades a new dimension of intelligence, termed as *EI*, has received much attention as being more responsible for success than IQ (Goleman, 1995a). Goleman pointed that only about 20% of individual difference in job performance or career success could be attributed to IQ, and suggested that the remaining 80% variance is related to EI. EI has proved to be a better predictor of success than traditional methods like GPA, IQ, and standardized test scores (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Subsequently, Mayer & Salovey (1997) also suggested that general intelligence accounts for approximately 10-20% of life success, defined as academic achievement and occupational status.

In one of its earliest conceptualizations, EI was defined as "the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 10). From the earliest days on studies on EI, Salovey & Mayer (1990) have insisted that El qualifies as a form of intelligence that will broaden the traditional conceptualization of intelligence. They further argued that it is a form of intelligence that may be learned or taught and may account for individual differences in many important human facets such as psychological well-being, occupational and academic success, life satisfaction and the quality of interpersonal relationships (Palmer, 2003). Therefore, it would be possible to educate those who are low in their emotional competencies in order to enhance their capabilities in recognizing, expressing, and regulating feelings (Mayer & Geher, 1996). This concept became popular in 1995 when Daniel Goleman published his book "*Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*" in which he described EI in terms of "abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in face of frustration; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's mood and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope" (Goleman, 1995b, p. 36).

As a result of the immense interest generated by EI, this conceptualization soon became the source of endless debate and confusion regarding the nature of El and the best way to measure it (Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2001). To this moment, there are a number of definitions and models of El but as Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi (2000) commented in a review of EI literature "while the definitions of EI are often varied for different researchers, they nevertheless tend to be complementary rather than contradictory" (p. 540). They further pointed out that, in general, the various measures *of EI* share four distinct areas: emotion perception, regulation, understanding, and utilization. Research has indicated that EI may have interesting and valuable relationships with a number of important interpersonal success factors, such as social network size and quality (Ciarrochi et al.,

2001), positive relations with others (Lopes, Salovey, & Straus, 2003) and life satisfaction (Palmer, Donaldson, & Stough, 2002; Saklofske, Austin, & Minski, 2003).

Given that emotions are not simply a support for teaching and learning, but a vital and integral part of teaching and learning themselves (Goleman, 1995a; Hargreaves, 2000) and taking into account the findings that illustrate it is possible to enhance an individuals' EI through an appropriate learning period, there is an urgent need to understand the EI levels of Iranian EFL learners and how their EI is related to their choice of reading strategies. Recently, EI or emotional skills have received considerable research interest in the field of education and psychology. Previous research has revealed that EI is associated with success in many areas, including effective teaching (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010), student learning (Brackett & Mayer, 2003), and academic performance (Gil-Olarte, Palomera, & Brackett, 2006). Nevertheless, as Brackett & Katulak (2007) state, quite a few studies have been conducted to explore this concept in contexts where English is spoken as a second or foreign language, given the idea that EI serves both internal mechanisms and external environment in the process of language learning (Goleman, 2001). Hence, the present study is an attempt to fill the research gap in this domain.

2. Research Hypotheses

HO1: There is no significant relationship between the overall Emotional Quotient (EQ) and the choice of reading strategies of Iranian EFL learners.

HO2: There is no significant relationship between EQ and English language proficiency of learners.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Studies on EI

The roots of EI can arguably be traced back to the start of the last century, but the majority of books and research addressing EI appeared within the last fifteen years (Shulze & Roberts, 2005). The first use of the term "EI" is usually attributed to Wayne Payne's doctoral thesis, *A Study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence* published in 1985 (Barrett & Salovey, 2002, Payne, 1986). The work of Mayer and Salovey more clearly developed the idea of EI as an intelligence (e.g., Mayer & Salovey, 1997; 1993; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). These researchers are considered as the first shcolars who formally defined EI and demonstrated that it could be measured (Mayer, DiPaolo, & Salovey, 1990; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In a framework that brought together a diverse literature on the appraisal and communication of emotions, Salovey & Mayer (1990) conceptualized EI as a set of mental abilities to do with emotions and the processing of emotional information.Within this framework, Salovey & Mayer (1990) proposed that individuals differed in these abilities, and that these differences were potentially important because; (a) emotional abilities might explain the existent variance in important life events such as psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and the quality of interpersonal relationships; and (b) because such differences underpin skills that could possibly be learned or taught.The term *EI* became popular in 1995 when Daniel Goleman published his best-selling book, *Emotional Intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ* (Goleman, 2006). He defined EI as the ability to identify and understand one's own emotional reactions and those of others (Goleman, 1995b, 1998).

According to one consulting company (Behavioral Health Strategies, 2000), Goleman's proposals related to the theory of EI "caught the attention of the world" (p. 10) and it is now the most widely read social science book in the world (Gardner, 1999). Another phase of inquiry on EI dates back to 1997 when Reuven Bar-On, as a clinical psychologist, was conducting a research to understand why some people have better psychological well-being than others and why some are more successful than others (Bar-On, 1997). His research revealed that cognitive intelligence alone was not a predictor of success, but that success was strongly influenced by non-cognitive emotional skills (Bar-On, 1997). He defined EI as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (Bar-On, 1997, p. 16). He describes his model as "multifactorial" (p. 17) and related to "potential for performance" (p. 17) rather than success itself. He also indicates that the model is "process oriented, rather than outcome oriented" (p.17).

Nowadays, the study of EI has flourished in the form of a number of models and measurements devices (e.g. Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1995b; Petrides & Furnham, 2006; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Schutte et al., 1998). Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso (2000a) categorized models of EI into two types: (1) *the Ability Model* in which EI is perceived as a form of intelligence, involving cognitive processing of emotional information; and (2) *Mixed or Trait-based Model* that considers EI as partly or wholly a personality-like trait, or behavioural disposition.

Ability model regards El as a form of cognitive ability, which is subjected to the same laws that govern traditional conceptions of intelligence (Matthews et al., 2002). The theory predicts that EI is, in fact, a type of intelligence like other intelligences in that it will meet three empirical criteria (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000c). First, mental problems have right or wrong answers, as assessed by the convergence of alternative

scoring methods. Second, the measured skills correlate with other measures of mental ability as well as with self-reported empathy. Third, the absolute ability level increases with age. Mayer et al. (2000a) proposed a four-branch ability model of EI which are arranged hierarchically from the more basic psychological processes to the higher, more psychologically integrated processes, including (1) *Emotional Perception***:** the ability to perceive emotions, (2) *Emotional Integration***:** the ability to utilize emotion to facilitate reasoning, (3) *Emotional Understanding***:** the capacity to understand the meaning of emotions and the information they convey and (4) *Emotional Management***:** the ability to effectively regulate and manage emotion (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Their research also resulted in developing two measures, the *Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS*) and *the Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT)* that assess the four components of their model of EI (Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso, 2000b). The authors maintained that "results from MSCEIT and its precursor, the MEIS, are providing increasing information about the measurement of EI as an ability and what it predicts" (Mayer et al., 2000b, p. 332).

Two common mixed model approaches of EI are based on the work of Goleman (1998) and Bar-On (1997). Mixed models are considered to be different from ability models since they describe personality characteristics in addition to abilities in theory and models (Mayer et al., 2000c). Mayer & Cobb (2000) noted, "The mixed model mixes EI as a cognitive ability, with social competencies, personality traits, and behaviors" (p. 75). Goleman (1995a) initially identified five dimensions of EI with twenty-five competencies, but subsequent research (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000) led to a reduction of his original model to four dimensions with nineteen competencies. As described by Boyatzis et al. (2000), the following are the four dimensions of the model:

Self-awareness - This dimension consists of knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions. This dimension contains the competencies of emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence.

Self-management - This dimension involves the management of one's internal states, impulses, and resources to facilitate reaching goals. This dimension contains the competencies of self-control, trustworthiness and conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement orientation, and initiative.

Social Awareness - This dimension is comprised of being aware of others' feelings, needs, and concerns. This dimension contains the competencies of empathy, organizational awareness, and service orientation, and developing others.

Social Skills-This dimension involves adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others. This dimension contains the competencies of leadership, communication, influence, change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds, teamwork, and collaboration and developing others.

"*ECI*" was developed as a measure based on Goleman's (1998) model of EI consisting of 25 competencies spread among five clusters: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-regulation, (c) motivation, (d) empathy, and (e) social skills (Boyatzis et al., 2000). The instrument asked respondents to describe themselves or others based on a one to seven scales, with one indicating that the behavior is sporadic and only slightly characteristic of the individual, and seven indicating that theindividual most often behaves this way (Boyatzis et al., 2000). The intended population for this instrument was adults, and it has been used primarily in business settings.

The second mixed model is Reuven Bar-On's model of EI (1997). Bar-On &Handley (1999) describe the factorial components of the Bar-On Model as:

Intrapersonal Components - These include self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, and self-actualization.

Interpersonal Components - These include empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationship.

Stress Management Components - These include stress tolerance, impulse control, and independence.

Adaptability Components - These include reality testing, flexibility, and problem solving.

General Mood Components - These include optimism and happiness.

Bar-On's (1997) model of EI led to the development of the *Emotional Quotient Inventory* (*EQ-i*). The instrument was designed as a self-report measure of emotional and social intelligence. The EQ-i consists of 133 Likert scale items, with responses ranging on a 5-point scale from 1 –"very seldom or not true of me" to 5 – "very often true of me or true of me." The instrument has been assessed at a fourth grade reading level, is suitable for individuals aged 17 or older and it takes around forty minutes to complete. The scoring structure is like many cognitive intelligence measures (i.e., IQ tests), where the score is based on a mean of 100 with a standard deviation of 15, and it is therefore Bar-On refers to it as Emotional Quotient (EQ) (Bar-On, 2000).

3.2 Studies on Reading Strategies

Many researchers have recognized that reading is one of the most important skills for foreign language learners to acquire and master. Carrell (1989) stated that "For many students, reading is by far the most important of the four skills in a second language, particularly in English as a second or foreign language."(p. 1). Reading helps

ESL/EFL learners build their vocabulary while leading them to enduring learning and improvement in L2 learning skills (ibid.). Grabe (1991) also perceived that reading is an essential skill and probably the most important skill for second language learners to master in academic contexts.

Within the field of education during the last two decades, a gradual but significant shift has taken place, resulting in less stress on teachers and teaching and greater emphasis on learners and learning (Nunan, 1988). At the same time, Oxford (1990) asserted that the point of concentration in second language research has changed from the products of language learning to the processes through which learning takes place. Oxford (1990) stated that strategies are particularly important for language learning "because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence" (p. 1). Then, Grenfell & Harris (1999) also declared that learning strategies are important in second language learning and teaching for two major reasons. First, as we examine the strategies used by second language learners during the language learning process, we gain insights into the metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective processes involved in language learning. The second reason is that less successful language learners can be taught new strategies in order to help them become better language learners (Grenfell & Harris, 1999). Researchers such as Oxford (1990); Cohen (1987); and O'Malley & Chamot (1990) have stressed that skilled learners employ different strategies and techniques in order to solve the problems they face in acquiring or producing language. All language learners use learning strategies either consciously or unconsciously when processing new information and performing tasks in the language classroom (Oxford, 1994).

Regardless of the past research into the existence and application of learning strategies, much debates has spread about "exactly how many strategies are available to learners to assist them in L2 learning and how these strategies should be classified" (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002, p. 368). Various suggestions on how strategies can be enumerated and classified have been made (e.g. O'Malley et al., 1985; Rubin, 1987; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990, Stern, 1992), each of which is based on an individual theory about learning strategies and their effect on L2 acquisition. Oxford (1990) presented a new taxonomy in which learning strategies were divided into "direct" and "indirect" strategies. According to Oxford (1990), The former type of strategies refers to ''strategies that directly involve the target language'' in the sense that they ''require mental processing of the language" (p. 37), while the latter ''provide indirect support for language learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing cooperation and empathy and other means'' (p. 151). These strategies can be specified as follows:

1) **Direct strategies**: (a). Memory strategies for remembering and retrieving new information. (b) Cognitive strategies for understanding and producing the language and (c) Compensation strategies for using the language despite lack of knowledge.

2) **Indirect strategies**: (a) Metacognitive strategies for coordinating the learning process. (b) Affective strategies for regulating emotions. (c) Social strategies for learning with others (Oxford, 1990, pp. 14-15). According to Ellis (1994), Oxford's taxonomy of language learning strategies is the most comprehensive classification to date (p. 539).

Strategies have been investigated widely for reading comprehension in general and in second and foreign language contexts, in particular. Many researchers perceive the importance of using reading strategies as a factor which contributes to successful reading. According to Song (1998), reading strategies are important because they help learners to improve their reading comprehension, and to enhance efficiency in reading. Singhal (2001) believes that "reading strategies are of interest for the way readers manage their interaction with written text and how these strategies are related to the text comprehension" (p. 1). Analyzing reading strategies as a problem-solving process gives an insight as to how readers interact with text and how their choice of strategies influences their comprehension of the text (Cohen & Upton, 2006, p. 2). Alderson (2000) emphasized that good readers are flexible users of strategies. As Paris & Jacobs (1984) state, "skilled readers often engage in deliberate activities that require planful thinking, flexible strategies, and periodic self-monitoring... [while] novice readers often seem oblivious to these strategies and the need to use them" (p. 2083). However, as research indicate, "use of certain reading strategies does not always lead to successful reading comprehension, while use of other strategies does not always result in unsuccessful reading comprehension" (Carrell, 1992, p. 168). In other words, to be strategic readers, students not only need to know what strategies to use, but also when, why, and how to use these strategies appropriately and effectively (Cheng, 1998).

In the context of Iran, great interest in the domain of EI has led to the growing number of studies on the role of EI in foreign language learning. Aghasafari (2006), in a correlational design, investigated the relationship between EQ and second language strategies among 100 sophomore participants at Islamic Azad University in Iran. The results indicated that there was a positive relationship between overall EQ and language learning strategies. Pishghadam (2009a) tried to determine the influence of emotional and verbal intelligences on English language learning success in Iran. To fully understand the nature of learning, he gathered and analyzed both the product and the process data. The results of the product-based phase demonstrated that the EI is instrumental in learning different skills, specifically productive ones. The analyses of oral and written modes of language

revealed the effects of emotional and verbal intelligences on turn-taking, amount of communication, the number of errors, and writing ability. In another study, Pishghadam (2009b) aimed at examining the relationship between EI and foreign language learning. This study found several subscales to be significant predictors of GPA (all subscales), reading (stress management, adaptability, general mood), listening (intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, general mood), speaking (intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, general mood), and writing (stress management). Second language skills and GPA were strongly associated with several dimensions of EI questionnaire (intrapersonal and stress management abilities) completed at the end of the academic year. Collectively, these variables were found to be strong predictors in identifying both academically successful and unsuccessful second-year students. Results of t-tests indicated that emotional competencies such as stress management, adaptability and general mood would affect reading.

Motallebzadeh (2009) intended to determine if there was any relationship between the EI of Iranian EFL learners and their reading comprehension and structural ability. In order to investigate the relationship between reading comprehension scores in MELAB and preferences on Bar-On Emotional Quotient inventory, a correlation was calculated. Results revealed that ,except for social responsibility and empathy as interpersonal categories, there was a strong relationship between EI and EFL learners' reading comprehension and structural ability. Ghanizadeh & Moafian (2010) examined the relationship between EFL teachers' emotional quotient (EQ) and their pedagogical success in language institutes. In addition, the role of their years of teaching experience in their EQ and their age with EQ were also explored. Subsequent data analysis revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' success and EQ. Furthermore, significant correlations were found between teachers' EQ, their teaching experience, and their age.

4. Method

4.1 Participants

The sample for this study consisted of two groups of participants. The first group of participants in this study was composed of a total of 120 female learners who were studying English as a foreign language at Kish Language Institute in Mashhad, Iran. The second group was 16 M.A. students of TEFL at Hakim Sabzevari University in Sabzevar, Iran. Since some of the participants did not complete both Bar-On EQ-I and Oxford SILL questionnaires, the number of participants taken into account in the data analysis decreased to 126. Most of the students were female and just 2 were male. Their ages ranged from 18 to 30 years with a mean age of 24.

4.2 Instrumentation

The researchers used two research instruments, questionnaire and interview, for conducting study. First, in order to determine the English language proficiency levels of the participants, MTELP was administered to all participants during their 90- minute class session. The test is composed of 100 multiple-choice questions including 40 grammar, 40 vocabulary, and 20 reading comprehension items, which were to be completed in 75 minutes. Second, "Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I; Bar-On, 1997)" was used to assess the students' EI. In brief, the EQ-i contains 133 items in the form of short sentences and employs a 5-point response scale with a textual response format ranging from "very seldom or not true of me" (1) to "very often true of me or true of me" (5). The EQ-i is suitable for individuals aged 17 years and older and takes approximately 40 minutes to complete. Last, the participants were asked to answer "Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL; Oxford, 1990)" in order to find the frequency and choice of their reading strategies. The SILL version 7.0 was designed to assess the frequency and choice of strategy use of learners of English as a second or foreign language. It consists of 50 items and takes approximately 30 minutes to administer. The respondents are asked to indicate their responses (on a scale of 1 to 5) to a strategy description, such as "I use the English words I know in different ways" or "I have clear goals for improving my English skill."

The other instrument was structured interviews for both reading strategies and EI. The reading strategy interview consisted of five questions asking students about their reading habits, opinions on the reading comprehension tests, and the strategies they used while reading or learning in an EFL context. The EI interview had six questions asking about the five scales of Bar-On EI such as intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability and general mood. The interview was held in Persian to make sure all the participants understood the questions and to put them at ease to answer the questions. The purpose of the interview was to probe more specific information of participants' strategy use and their emotional effectiveness and further to complement the results of the quantitative assessments.

4.3 Procedure

Data collection was carried out from June to October. The study was conducted in both Kish Language Institute and Hakim Sabzevari University. At first, the participants were asked to answer MTELP in order to assess their English language proficiency. To obtain authentic data, this test was administered in a regular class session and the teacher informed the students that their grades would influence their final grades. Then, in one more session,

Oxford's SILL and Bar-On EQ-I questionnaires were distributed among the students and they completed them. To receive reliable data, the purpose of administering the questionnaires was explained to the participants and they were assured that endeavor would be made to observe the confidentiality and anonymity considerations.

After the participants completed the questionnaire, the follow-up one-to-one interviews were conducted with ten participants. All the interviewees were from those who obtained high graders in Bar-On EQ-i and were emotionally efficient (above 115). The interview was held in Persian to make sure all the participants understood the questions and to put them at ease to answer the questions. The quantitative data for this study were analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V.16).

5. Results & Discussion

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

In order to show the distribution of data in all the cases and illustrate the frequencies in each case, Table 1, 2 and 3 below supply a summary of descriptive statistics of the data related to the research hypotheses.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of total EQ and Strategy Categories

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
EQ	126	1.55	3.88	2.8520	0.43137
Memory	126	2.07	4.14	3.2922	0.47254
Cognitive	126	1.66	4.83	3.2812	0.70345
Compensation	126	2.00	4.66	3.5917	0.60713
Metacognitive	126	1.16	4.33	2.7727	0.70601
Affective	126	2.33	4.83	3.3541	0.61612
Social					
Valid N(listwise)	126				

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Total EQ and Frequency of Total SILL

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
EQ	126	314.00	603.00	447.46	58.54
MTELP		8.00	77.00	39.60	16.86
Valid N(listwise)	126				

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Total EQ and MTELP

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
EQ	126	314.00	603.00	447.46	58.54
MTELP		8.00	77.00	39.60	16.86
Valid N(listwise)	126				

5.2 Inferential Statistics: Hypotheses Testing

5.2.1 Hypothesis 1

Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient (r) was calculated separately to see whether there was any significant correlation between the learners' total EQ and each strategy category used. As it can be seen in Table 4, the obtained results indicate that the observed correlation was 0.280 at the confidence level of $p.\leq 0.05$. Since the level of significance in Pearson test (0.77) is higher than the accepted level of significance (0.05), it means that there is no significant relationship between the total EI and memory strategies learning among EFL learners in Iran.

To analyze the data further, a simple regression analysis was conducted. The results indicated that the students' total score of EQ is not a significant predictor of the dependent variable (memory strategies). It was observed that only 7% of the variance in the choice of memory strategies was explained by their total EQ.

Table 4 Correlation between Total EQ and Memory Strategies

	EQ	Memory
EQ Pearson Correlation	1	0.280
Sig(2-tailed)		0.077
N	126	126
Memory Pearson Correlation	0.280	1
Sig(2-tailed)	0.077	
N	126	126

Table 5 displays the results of the correlation analysis between total EQ and cognitive strategies. As it is seen in the table, the coefficient of correlation is 0.219 which can be concluded that total EQ does not statistically correlate with cognitive strategies at p.≤ 0.05. According to the results of the regression analysis, it was also found that the total amount of EI does not significantly predict the choice of cognitive strategies as the dependent variable. In this analysis, it was observed that only 4% of the variance in cognitive strategy choice was explained by their total EQ.

Table 5 Correlation between Total EQ and Cognitive Strategies

	EQ	Cognitive
EQ Pearson Correlation	1	0.219
Sig(2-tailed)		0.169
N	126	126
Cognitive Pearson Correlation	0.219	1
Sig(2-tailed)	0.169	
N	126	126

Another correlation was run to investigate the relationship between the total EQ and the compensative strategies. As shown in Table 6, the value of "r" is negligible and not meaningful (r=0.162). Moreover, since the significance of correlation (0.313) is higher than the accepted level of significance (0.05), we can conclude that there is no significant relationship between total EI and compensation strategies. The results obtained by the regression analysis also illustrated that the participants' total EQ score was not significantly predicting compensation strategy scores. It also showed that approximately 2% of the variance in the choice of compensation strategies is explained by the amount of total EQ.

Table 6 Correlation between Total EQ and Compensation Strategies

	EQ	Compensation
EQ Pearson Correlation	1	-0.162
Sig(2-tailed)		0.313
N	126	126
Compensation Pearson Correlation	-0.162	1
Sig(2-tailed)	0.313	
N	126	126

Based on Table 7, the correlation between total EI and metacognitive strategies is significant at the 0.05 level (r=0.364, p. ≤ 0.05). In other words, based on the findings of the study, it can be asserted with 95% confidence that there is a significant positive relationship between the total EI of Iranian EFL learners and their use of metacognitive strategies. The results of the regression analysis found that EI is the significant predictor of metacognitive strategies at 0.05 level. The results also revealed that about 13% of variances in the choice of metacognitive strategies would be determined by variances in Total EQ.

Table 7 Correlation between Total EQ and Metacognitive Strategies

	EQ	Metacognitive
EQ Pearson Correlation	1	0.364*
Sig(2-tailed)		0.019
N	126	126
Metacognitive Pearson Correlation Sig(2-tailed)	0.364*	1
N	0.019	
EQ Pearson Correlation	126	126

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

As to the relationship between total EQ and affective strategies, the findings of the data analyses showed that there is a positive significant relationship between the two variables at the 0.05 level, (r=0.346,). This means that if one of the variables increases, the other increases, too. (See Table 8). Based on the results of the regression analysis, the total amount of EI could predict affective strategies significantly at 0.05 level. The total amount of EQ can predict 12% of variation in the choice of affective strategies.

Table 8 Correlation between EQ and Affective Strategies

	EQ	Affective
EQ Pearson Correlation	1	0.346*
Sig(2-tailed)		0.027
N	126	126
Affective Pearson Correlation	0.346*	1
Sig(2-tailed)	0.027	
N	126	126

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

As we can see in Table 9, the results of another correlation revealed that there is no significant correlation between total EQ and social strategies at p. ≤ 0.05. The calculated "r" was (0.16) and the correlation significance (0.919) was higher than the accepted level of significance (0.05). The results of the regression analysis showed that the total amount of EI is not a significant predictor of social strategies. It was also observed that nothing can be explained of the variance in the students' choice of social strategies through the variance in total EI.

Table 9 Correlation between Total EQ and Social Strategies

	EQ	Social
EQ Pearson Correlation	1	0.016
Sig(2-tailed)		0.919
N	126	126
Social Pearson Correlation	0.016	1
Sig(2-tailed)	0.919	
N	126	126

The results of data analysis in Table 10 displays that there is a positive significant correlation between the total EQ and the frequency of SILL at p. ≤ 0.05. The correlation coefficient was 0.326 and the significance of correlation was 0.037 which is lower than the accepted level of significance (0.05). To further explore the degree of the predictive power of total EQ in predicting the frequency of the reading strategies used by learners, a simple linear regression analysis was applied to the data. It was also observed that 10% of the dependent variables (the total number of reading strategies) can be explained by learners' EI.

Table 10 Correlation between Total EQ and Frequency of Total SILL

	EQ	Total SILL
EQ Pearson Correlation	1	0.326*
Sig(2-tailed)		0.037
N	126	126
Total SILL Pearson Correlation	0.326*	1
Sig(2-tailed)	0.037	

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

5.2.2 Hypothesis 2

Then, to investigate the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' EQ and their English language proficiency,

Pearson product–moment correlation was used again. The results in Table 11 revealed that there was a significant correlation between learners' proficiency and total EQ (r=0.310, p. ≤ 0.05). To analyze the data further, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted. It is clear from the results that the total amount of EI is accepted as a significant predictor of participants' scores on MTELP=. The results revealed that the model containing the total scores of the EQ test can predict 9% of the learners' grades on MTELP.

Table 11 Correlation between Total EQ and MTELP

EQ Pearson Correlation	1	0.310*
Sig(2-tailed)		0.049
N	126	126
MTELP Pearson Correlation	0.310*	1
Sig(2-tailed)	0.049	
N	126	126
***.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)**		

5.3 Qualitative Results

5.3.1 Results of Reading Strategy Interview

To investigate the participants' reading strategies more, 10 participants with high EQ were selected to be interviewed. They were asked five different questions about their reading strategies, reading habits, and opinions on the reading comprehension test. It is interesting that most of the interviewees (9 out of 10) pointed to metacognitive strategies as the most frequent strategies used by them. For instance, they referred to "highlighting the most important parts in the text" or "summarizing the text" as two usual strategies they use in order to learn better. They never or seldom made use of memory strategies since they thought they were not very helpful and practical for them. All the participants in this interview proposed that they seldom asked their English teachers or classmates for help when they faced language learning difficulties. Three explanations were given for their not asking help from the teachers. One participant stated, "I am afraid to be laughed at by my teachers or other classmates if my questions were too easy." Another student declares, "I am not familiar with my English teacher." and still another participant claims, "My teachers seem busy after class." Furthermore, most of the interviewees declared that they thought their classmates' English proficiency was as poor as theirs, so they were afraid that their classmates might give them wrong answers.

When taking the reading comprehension test, 3 out of 10 students said that they would skim first and then read the passage carefully, while 4 out of 10 students stated that they would read the questions first and then go back to read the passage. Only two students would read the passage word by word. It was found that 7 out of 10 students liked to use an mobile dictionary because they thought it would be time-saving and convenient. All of the interviewees said that at first they tried to guess the meaning from the context and then if that did not work, they would look it up in a dictionary.

5.3.2 Results of Interviews on EI

In order to find more authentic information about participants' EI and to complement the Bar-On EQ-I results, EI interviews were conducted. 10 participants who scored high in Bar-On EQ-I answered six questions about different components of EI. Most of the participants (7 out of 10) pointed to "interest" and "necessity" as two main reasons for their English learning. All the interviewees declared that they had close, intimate relationship with their family members in a way that they could easily talk about their problems with them or consult them and vice-versa.

All the participants stated that they had experienced situations which made them become angry, impulsive or impatient. They explained that in these situations they try to control their feelings through discussing the problem or matter. One of them said that this had happened frequently in her life, but she did not become angry or impatient. Most of them (7 out of 10) mentioned "lack of enough trying" as the main obstacle while others stated that "lack of self-confidence, successive failures, and a feeling of weakness" were preventive of success. All declared the same definition for success as being satisfied with themselves and their life and attaining their goals/purposes. Most of the participants (8 out of10) pointed to "continuing their education and trying to progress in their work" as one of their main plans for their future.

6. Discussion

The present study aimed to address the relationship between EI and the choice of reading strategies of Iranian EFL learners. In response to the first question, it was found that there is no relationship between the total amount of EI and memory strategies. This means that students who apply memory strategies are not necessarily those who have high EQ. This finding was expected since memory strategy is a direct strategy that requires mental processing of the language. It includes activities done to help students store and retrieve new information, so it is

related much more with cognitive intelligence (IQ) rather than EI. Furthermore, according to the interview results, participants with high EQ maintained that, in their opinion, the employment of memory strategies was not very helpful in the course of their learning.

It was also observed that the total amount of EI could not correlate with cognitive strategies significantly. This may be due to the fact that cognitive strategies are considered as direct strategies such as repetition, organizing new language, and summarizing meaning used to understand and produce new language. In fact, EI helps students' success in learning indirectly through managing and controlling emotions, so it is likely that it could have no relation with using cognitive strategies while reading.

Against the researchers' expectation, no correlation was found between EI and the choice of compensation strategies. This is counterintuitive since as an EFL language learner, when one is faced with some limitations in one's knowledge, one should try to fill in the gaps with some compensation strategies such as guessing the meaning from the context in reading, using the synonyms or explaining the meaning, or using some examples to understand the intended message or transfer it. It could be said that using compensation strategies is a kind of problem solving in a way that when students encounter some learning problems or lack of knowledge, those with high EQ and self-confidence are expected to be more successful in managing their anxiety and disappointment and try to use some compensation strategies adeptly at their own advantage. This inconsistency with expectation may be due to the fact that Iranian EFL students are not informed of and instructed in these strategies in learning settings. This is because, in Iranian learning contexts, students are not persuaded to use their cognition and creativity to make their message clear. However, in interview responses, it was revealed that they try to guess the meaning of unknown words which is a kind of compensation strategy.

The findings of the present study also revealed that a positive significant relationship exists between overall EI and the choice of metacognitive strategies. However, this finding should not be overestimated since, according to the results of the regression analysis, it was suggested that only about 13% of the variation in students' choice of metacognitive strategies could be explained by taking their EI into account. This is in line with Bar-On's (2006) contention that mutual interaction of EI and cognitive intelligence contribute to a person's general intelligence, which then offers an indication of one's potential to succeed in life. Since affective strategies assist learners' control their feelings, motivations, and attitudes related to language learning (Oxford, 1990), it is evident that people who have high EQ and are aware of their emotions and can manage and control them could effectively apply more affective strategies. However, it was also found that the total amount of EQ can predict 12% of variation in the choice of affective strategies and it should not be overestimated.

Against the researchers' anticipation, no correlation was observed between EI and social strategies. It means that those who use social strategies are not necessarily those who obtain high scores in Bar-On EQ-i. Since social strategies involve processes such as asking questions, cooperating with others and empathizing with others in the context of learning, it is expected that students with high EQ, or specifically high interpersonal skill, use social strategies more, since according to Bar-On (1997), interpersonal skill is based on sensitivity towards others, a desire to establish relations as well as feeling satisfied with relationships. Individuals with strength in this area were able to establish and maintain mutual and emotionally close relationships, be constructive and cooperative members of social groups, and be aware of, understanding of, and appreciative of the feelings of others (Bar-On & Parker, 2000). This inconsistency in findings may originate from the influence of other factors. First, this study only explored the role of total EQ in the choice of reading strategies and did not take into account the influence of EI scales such as interpersonal scale inclusively. Second, this may be due to the fact that Iranian learning contexts are more teacher-dominated and competitive rather than cooperative, and students are not encouraged to learn from each other or ask their questions from their classmates. The results of the interview also supported the findings of quantitative analyses. Most of the interviewees with high EQ expressed that they seldom ask their questions from their classmates since they think their knowledge is the same as themselves and could not help them or they have the anxiety of being fooled by others if their questions are easy.

Moreover, it was observed that there was a significant correlation between overall EQ and the frequency of strategies used by EFL learners. This corresponds with the findings of Aghasafari (2006) who found considerable relationship between EI andlanguage learning strategies and also it is in line with the results of the study carried out by Hasanzadeh and Shahmohammadi (2011) which indicated a significant relationship between students' total EI and learning strategies both in females and males. However, it was also observed that 10% of the frequency of reading strategies could be explained by learners' EI which means that some other factors next to emotional factors such as gender, major of studies, and age were also influential.

Regarding the second research question, it was demonstrated that overall EQ correlates significantly with the English language proficiency of the learners. A similar result was also found by Shakib & Barani (2011) who investigated the relationship between Iranian high school students' EQ level and their level of language proficiency. The results revealed that there was a reliable and meaningful relationship between language proficiency and EI. However, it should be considered that about 9% of the variation in learners' grades on MTELP can be explained by taking their EI into account and other factors such as gender, motivation, and age

may also be determinant and impact the results in a way that in other studies the results may be reversed. For instance, Zarafshan & Ardeshiri (2012) also explored the effects of EI and use of language learning strategies on English proficiency among Iranian EFL university students. The results revealed that there was a negative relationship between EI and English proficiency.

7. Conclusion

The present study came to the following conclusions regarding the relationship and interaction between the variables investigated. The statistical results of the research revealed that overall EI only correlated significantly with metacognitive and affective reading strategies. The results also showed that there existed significant relationship between the total amount of EI and the frequency of reading strategies used by Iranian EFL learners. Besides, a significant relationship was found between their EQ scores and the amount of their English language proficiency on MTELP. The results of the regression analysis also showed that the total amount of EI could predict metacognitive and memory strategies significantly. Moreover, there were significant predictors of both the total number of strategies and the English language proficiency of the learners. Another important finding observed by looking at the mean score of total SILL inventory grades was that Iranian EFL learners are moderate users of reading strategies. Moreover, it was seen that metacognitive strategies were the most frequently type of strategies used by Iranian EFL learners while memory strategies were the least used strategies, conforming to previous findings observed by different Iranian researchers. To find more information about participants' EQ, the researchers looked at the standard mean of their total EQ score and it showed that Iranian EFL learners have average EQ. The responses obtained by interview questions were in line with and also reinforced the results of statistical analyses. All interviewees with high EQ reported metacognitive strategies as the most frequent type of strategies used by them and memory strategies as the least used ones.

All interviewees with high EQ were intrapersonally and interpersonaly intelligent who were so motivated and optimistic in pursuing their goals during their life. They could control their stress easily at their own advantage and were also realistic persons who could accept their failures and could talk about them. These findings conform to Bar-On, 1997; 2000; 2007 who declared that socially and emotionally intelligent people would be able to understand and express themselves, understand and communicate well with others, and manage and cope with the stresses of everyday life. Moreover, emotionally healthy students are happier, more cooperative, and learn more effectively (Nelson & Low, 2005).

On the basis of the results in this study, it could be concluded that the educational system of Iran and as well as educators should pay much attention to both the EI of learners and the appropriate use of reading strategies in EFL contexts. It is necessary for the language teachers not to forget the emotional characteristics of their students and to pay attention to their emotional qualities. As Gardner (1993) states, to fully understand the complexity of the language learning process, we should pay attention to the internal mechanisms and social interpersonal interaction involved in this process. To this effect, EI can be a great help since, as Goleman (2001) states, "it not only serves as an internal mechanism, but also interlocks with the external environment" (p.15). Therefore, before selecting any teaching materials, educators should conduct a needs analysis and a test in order to find out the EI profile of the students and to avoid any mismatch between selected topics and the students' needs. They should also encourage students to employ all different reading strategies in different situations and also try to persuade them to learn cooperatively with the help of each other.

As it is known that EI can be increased, trained, and schooled (Elias et al., 1997) and since high trait EI improves academic and scholastic performance at schools (Petrides, Frederickson, & Furhum, 2004), it clearly demands for second language teacher to try raising EI and its components, specifically happiness, interpersonal, and stress management by using strategies in which they can put more emphasis on the affective domain. This can be fulfilled by group work, listening to light music, watching emotional clips, self-disclosures, designing questionnaires, reading literature and psychological texts, and self-discovery techniques (Pishghadam, 2009b). Moreover, a small group discussion will enhance good social interaction and positive criticism from peers in the classroom and lower pupils' stress and anxiety dramatically. It gives them a sense of security in which they can express their feelings easily with less inhibition in the foreign language environment.

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