



Investigating Iraqi EFL 4th Grade University Students' Social Intelligence Role in Language Learning and Teaching

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Abstract

Social intelligence, as one of the major topics in linguistics and language learning and teaching, is defined as the ability to get along with people in general and this ability is different from one person to another. It plays a central role in contemporary language learning and teaching approaches such as ; communicative language teaching , community language learning and many other alike methods .To find out the Iraqi EFL 4th grade university students' social intelligence role a questionnaire is prepared and applied on a sample of 100 university students after securing the validity and the reliability of the instrument .The results obtained reveal that Iraqi EFL 4th grade university students have all the domains of the social intelligence based on the high rate of the mean scores of the questionnaire which rates between (75.7-78.1) .

تقصي دور الذكاء الاجتماعي عند طلبة المرحلة الرابعة في تعلم وتدرّيس اللغة

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الملخص

الذكاء الاجتماعي أحد المواضيع الرئيسة في علم اللغة وتدرّيسها وتعلمها، ويعرف بأنه القدرة على التآلف مع الناس بصورة عامة، وهذه القدرة تختلف من شخص إلى آخر وتلعب دوراً مركزياً في طرائق تدرّيس اللغة وتعليمها، كالطريقة التواصلية والتعلم الاجتماعي، ولمعرفة دور الذكاء الاجتماعي عند طلبة المرحلة الرابعة الجامعيين تم اعداد استبيان، وتطبيقه على عينة من الطلبة الجامعيين، بعد أن تم ضمان سلامة واعتمادية الاداة (الاستبيان)، وبينت النتائج التي انتهى إليها أن طلبة المرحلة الرابعة الجامعيين المتعلمين اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية لديهم ذكاء اجتماعي، وكان ذلك حسب معدل الوسط الحسابي للإجابات على الاستبيان الذي كان يتراوح بين (٧٥.٧-٧٨.١).

Keywords: Social intelligence; language learning and teaching; university students

Section one: Introduction

The problem of the Study

It is clear to everyone that language is a means of communication and it is unique to human beings. One of the most distinguished features of the language is being individual and social at the same time; it is individual in the sense that by which one can express his own attitude, feelings, thought, etc.; and it is social when a group of people have certain social context they share it all. Contemporary communicative language teaching is ascribed to be a highly social, interactional and interpersonal in nature. In addition, it aims at calling for the interpersonal skills of both learners and teachers. In fact, it is said that whatever language teaching approach is employed, it will probably involve some forms of communication and interpersonal interaction and possibly some kinds of co-operative working structures, all of which can benefit from socially competent learners as well as teachers.

Social intelligence (SI henceforth) has a central role to play in contemporary English language teaching; however, this phenomenon is ignored by many researchers and specialists alike since few researchers, if any, tackle this area of language study. Many Iraqi EFL teachers ignore the social roles of the learners and how they affect language teaching and learning. Therefore, this research is an attempt to investigate the role of the SI in relation to language learning and teaching. Many previous studies have confirmed the salient role of SI in language teaching and learning. In this regard, Dewaele et al., (2008), Shao et al., (2013), and Oz et al., (2015) have shown that high SI in learners is linked to a range of factors such as low foreign language anxiety or positive attitudes towards foreign language learning. Similarly, Imai (2010) provides another example that of which is the best one regarding SI within second language acquisition. This research has a number of findings from which it has indicated that language learning is socially and interactively constructed, and learners use them to support and help each other towards appropriating learning goals.

It is so important to understand how English language teachers' awareness of high levels of the students' SI manages their classrooms and relationships with and among learners in practice, as well as how they

manage their own motivations to protect their professional well-being. Many teachers are also not aware of all of their students' behaviors and practices to be able to explicitly report on them (Brown & McIntyre, 1993). Due to what mentioned above, the present study aims at finding out the role of the students' SI in English language learning and teaching since no single study has tackled this subject matter or tried to examine this role in relation to ELT.

Aims

The present study aims at:

1. Presenting a due account regarding SI.
2. Investigating the Iraqi EFL learners' SI role in learning.

Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that Iraqi EFL students do not have SI role in learning.

Limits

The present study is limited to:

1. Social intelligence role.
2. Iraqi EFL learners College students at 4th grade English department in the academic year of 2016-2017

Procedures

To achieve the aims of the study, the following procedures are followed:

1. Presenting a literature review regarding SI;
2. choosing a sample of students;
3. designing a questionnaire;
4. analyzing and discussing the data and the results obtained.

Section Two: Theoretical Background

Social intelligence Meanings

It is necessary to trace back the definitions and the origin of the term Social Intelligence, which is explored by many researchers and scholars alike. In fact, the term SI is first used by Dewey (1909) and Lull (1911), but the modern concept has its origins in E. L. Thorndike (1920) who divides intelligence into three main types namely: abstract intelligence i.e., pertaining to the ability to understand and manage ideas, mechanical intelligence i.e., concrete objects, and social intelligence. According to Thorndike's terms, SI means the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls to act wisely in human relations. Similarly, Moss and Hunt (1927) define SI as the ability to get along with others. Another view is presented by Vernon (1933, p. 44) who introduces the most common definition of SI by stating that SI is the

"ability to get along with people in general, social technique or ease in society, knowledge of social matters, susceptibility to stimuli from other members of a group, as well as insight into the temporary moods or underlying personality traits of strangers."

In contrast to the above mentioned views, Wechsler (1939; 1958), Rapaport, Gill & Shafer (1968) and Campbell & McCord (1996) look at SI as just general intelligence applied to social situations. This dismissal is affirmed by Matarazzo's (1972) fifth and final edition of Wechsler's monograph, in which social intelligence is dropped out as an index term.

Social Intelligence and Education

Teaching is inherently and fundamentally considered as a social activity based upon individuals' relationship. It requires teacher's attention to the relational aspects of classroom life and in particular how relationships among classroom members are shaped, mediated and enacted. Such a fact is corresponding with what Hattie's (2009) meta-analysis study. This view affirms that teacher-student relationships are ranked in the highest level of influences on learning, far above other popular key factors such as motivation.

Cozolino's (2013) research on the social neuroscience of education has also highlighted the importance of positive and healthy relationships in effective education. Furrer, Skinner & Pitzer (2014, p. 102) conclude that "an extensive body of research suggests the importance of close, caring *teacher-student* relationships and high quality peer relationships for students' academic self-perceptions, school engagement, motivation, learning, and performance".

Importance of SI in ELT

Throughout the history of language learning and teaching, it has been noticed that there are at least three key reasons why SI is especially important in contemporary language learning classrooms. These reasons can be presented as follow:

1. The nature of the dominant contemporary teaching paradigms in many language teaching contexts is based on communicative language teaching (CLT). When dealing with CLT perspective views, the focus is always placed on authentic classroom interactions, peer collaboration, and co-operative pair and group work activities. For language teachers who employ activities involving such in-class communication and co-operation, 'group dynamics is probably one of the most – if not the most – useful sub-disciplines in the social sciences for language teachers' (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003). These contemporary CLT approaches are highly social, interactional and interpersonal in nature, calling forth the interpersonal skills of both learners and teachers. Indeed, it is likely that whatever language teaching approach is employed, it will probably involve some form of communication and interpersonal interaction and possibly some kind of co-operative working structures, all of which can benefit from socially competent learners as well as teachers.
2. The need for competences concern global migration and the increasingly multicultural and multilingual nature of the classrooms in which teachers work as well as the world beyond the classroom. Thus, English language learners and teachers need intercultural skills for navigating not only their use of English but also their lives within and beyond the classroom. Here SI is again a critical ingredient,

helping learners and teachers develop and maintain rapport and show empathy and caring for others (Matsumoto et al., 2007; Spencer Oatey and Franklin, 2009). Kumaravadivelu (2012) claims that a relational approach to caring ‘helps us to listen attentively to others without prejudice’, and argues that this is ‘what is most needed when teachers deal with students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Teachers of English, in particular, because they are dealing with a language of globality and coloniality, face numerous dilemmas and conflicts almost on a regular basis’. Therefore, English teachers need SI to better guide these decisions.

3. The third reason is inherent in the nature of language teaching per se. One of the main goals of language teaching is to promote communicative competence, of which one dimension is intercultural competence. The latter in particular is linked to ethnocultural empathy, i.e. the ability to see the world from the perspective of someone from another culture (Rasoal et al., 2011). Fostering empathy, which is a key component SI, can mediate intercultural understanding, increase self-awareness and an awareness and appreciation of other cultures, and make learners open to others. Particularly in ELT, in which interlocutors may be using the language as a lingua franca, a non-culture-specific approach to intercultural competence is centrally important and, from this perspective, a key skill for learners and teacher to develop is that of empathy (Mercer, 2016).

Section Three: Methodology

Population and Sample Selection

The population of the study consists of Iraqi EFL 4th grade college students at the University of Wasit during the academic year (2016-2017). 100 students (50 male and 50 female) have been chosen randomly from English department/ college of education to represent the sample of the study.

Instruments

After reviewing the previous studies regarding SI, the researchers have consulted specialists and experts to measure this trait. Experts have been interviewed and the final form of the questionnaire (checklists) has been set according to the following criteria:

1. Limiting the domains included in the checklists;
2. designing the items that go under these domains;
3. preparing the checklist in its primary form that includes (35) items;
4. exposing the checklists to a group of experts to secure validity;
5. adjusting the checklist regarding the experts' views;
6. setting the checklist, modifying the items, and preparing the final form. (see appendix (1) and table (1)).

Table (1): Numbers and Domains of the SI Checklist Items

No	Domains	Items follow up	Numbers of items
1.	Dealing with others	1-11	11
2.	Social communication	12-20	9
3.	Understanding others	21-28	8
4.	Social Affects and effects	29-35	7
Total			35

Validity and Reliability

The SI scale has been applied on a sample of 40 students chosen from another college to secure validity and reliability by using statistical means for the pilot study.

SI Scale validity

Validity means measure what is supposed or intended to measure .It also means that the degree of achieving the aims or objectives of the study .Different methods have been used in this respect :

1. Face validity

Fifteen experts and specialists have been chosen to secure and prove the validity of the scale items .Most of them agree with the suitability of the items .Some items have been changed and other are modified .

2. Internal validity

To secure the internal validity of the scale items, the correlation factors have been accounted between the degree of each item and the domain it belongs to .See table (2) below:

Table (2): The correlation factors in each item and the domains it belongs to

Domain (s)	Item s	Correlatio n Factors	Level of significanc e	Domain(s)	item s	Correlatio n Factors	Level of significanc e
Dealing with others	1	0.340	0.01	Understanding others	18	0.756	0.01
	2	0.566	0.01		19	0.412	0.01
	3	0.712	0.01		20	0.433	0.01
	4	0.533	0.01		21	0.360	0.01
	5	0.342	0.01		22	0.455	0.01
	6	0.533	0.01		23	0.577	0.01
	7	0.677	0.01		24	0.322	0.01
	8	0.247	0.05		25	0.513	0.01
	9	0.512	0.01		26	0.415	0.01
	10	0.367	0.01		27	0.688	0.05
	11	0.255	0.05		28	0.512	0.05
Social communication	12	0.722	0.01	Social Affects and effects	29	0.333	0.01
	13	0.356	0.05		30	0.562	0.05
	14	0.521	0.01		31	0.234	0.01
	15	0.622	0.01		32	0.512	0.01
	16	0.15	0.05		33	0.277	0.05
	17	0.278	0.05		34	0.267	0.01
				35	0.677	0.01	

The results show that most of the items secure the correlation factors to the domain it belongs to at levels of significance range between (0.01 - 0.05).

Reliability of the SI scale

By reliability we mean the consistency of the scores , that is we get the same results if we apply and reapply the scale under the same circumstances .In this regard two methods have been used to secure the scale reliability :

1. Spilt –halves

Results have been divided into two halves to calculate person factor .The value of Person correlation factor between the two halves is(0.640)the Jit man formula has been used because of the unequal two halves .The value is (0.780) which is scientifically accepted .

2. Alph Cronpach

To secure the reliability of the SI scale items Alpha Cronpach formula is used as shown in the table (3) below:

Table (3): Reliability Values of the of SI Scale Using Alpha Cronpach

Domains	Items number	Alpha values
Dealing with others	11	0.678
Social communication	9	0.523
Understanding others	8	0.612
Social Affects and effects	7	0.655
Total marks		0.834

The results show that the SI scale item is highly reliable according to the values which are scientifically accepted.

Section Four: Results Discussions

Three statistical methods have been used namely ; Means scores , standard deviations and relative ratios to analyze the results of the students' responses to the SI scale as shown in the Table(4) below:

Table (4): Means scores, Standard Deviations, and Relative Ratios of the SI Scale

Domains	Items	Means scores	Standard deviation	Relative ratios%	Range
Dealing with others	11	35.17	4.22	78.1	1
Social communication	9	34.90	4.30	77.6	2
Understanding others	8	34.23	4.41	76.1	3
Social effects and effects	7	37.86	4.60	75.7	4
Total SI marks	35	142.15	13.60	76.8	

The results of the data collected as shown in the Table (4) are analyzed below according to the domains ;

1. "Dealing with other " the results reveal that the mean scores, standard deviation and relative ratiion are (35.17,4.22,78.1) accordingly .This mean that the students have a SI in this regard .
2. "Social communication "the results reveal that the mean scores, standard deviation and relative ratiion are (34.90, 4.30, 77.6) accordingly .This mean that the students also have a SI in this regard .
3. " Understanding others "the results reveal that the mean scores, standard deviation and relative ratiion are (34.23, 4.41, 76.1) accordingly .This mean that the students also have a SI in this regard .
4. " Social Affects and effects "the results reveal that the mean scores, standard deviation and relative ratiion are (37.86, 4.60, 75.7) accordingly .This mean that the students also have a SI in this regard .

Conclusions

According to the analysis of the results obtained we can conclude that :

1. Iraqi EFL learners have a good SI since the relative ratio is (76.8) which is high , So the hypothesis posed in advance is verified ,and the students have the trait of SI and this affect their teaching and play a role in this regard .
2. Iraqi EFL learners have all the domains of the SI since the relative ratios ranges between (75.7-78.1) and this also means that the students have all the domains of SI.
3. Iraqi EFL learners have a good SI in dealing and getting along with others since the relative ratio is the highest one (78.1%) in respect to the other domain.

Recommendations

According to the results obtained and its discussions , the following are some recommendations :

1. Iraqi EFL teachers should give due attention to the social intelligence role since this train is an integral part in the students learning .
2. social intelligence is ignored by many specialists in the field of language learning and teaching because teachers always test only language material and the lack of the tools necessary for assessing this trait , therefore this study highlight the instruments and ways for measuring this forgotten trait
3. social intelligence can be noticed and measured and then developed by the teachers buy encouraging his students to be active member in the language learning and teaching .

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Appendix (1)

No	Items	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
1	I get along with people older than me					
2	I respect people who are older than me					
3	I don't avoid talking with old people					
4	I easily engage with old people					
5	I feel I can do when I am in a group communication					
6	I sharing knowledge with my friends make me feel good					
7	I have good relationships with others in performing tasks of writing and speaking					
8	I am able to speak with all of different ages					
9	I can deal with persons at any group situation					
10	I share those who are younger than me in their happiness and sadness					
11	I think of what my followers think of in a social situation					
12	I think it is difficult to get others' intentions					
13	I share others' happiness and sadness					
14	I get interested just for being among my friends					
15	I feel sad for others' sadness					
16	I congratulate people at happy occasions					

17	I face difficulties in communicating with others					
18	I easily understand the language and what do others mean					
19	I commit what others want indoors and outdoors					
20	I do what the others expect me to do even I don't agree with them					
21	I need time to respond to other's needs					
22	I am always ready to help other					
23	I stand up when somebody comes to greet me and shake hands					
24	I listen and think carefully before speaking .					
25	Some people hate my dealing with social some situations					
26	I take care to others' opinions					
27	I get experiences by different social situations in and out the classroom					
28	Other people are affected by my social principles and thoughts					
29	I confront social problems with different best ways to solve them in writing and speaking					
30	I have the ability to persuade others and affect them in speaking and writing					
31	I reacted by some social situations					
32	I feel scared and anxious by some social situations					
33	I appreciate other feelings					
34	I cause problems to others when I respond unconsciously					
35	I feel confused by some social situations					