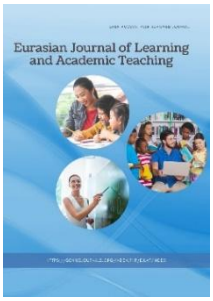

Role of Emotional Intelligence in EFL Learners' Speaking Accuracy and Fluency

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and speaking English as a foreign language among 240 intermediate-level learners from six universities. Participants completed an emotional functioning inventory and underwent a standardized speaking assessment measuring accuracy and fluency. The results show significant positive correlations between emotional intelligence and the components of speaking ability: self-awareness ($r=0.67$, $p<0.001$), self-regulation ($r=0.61$, $p<0.001$), motivation ($r=0.72$, $p<0.001$), and empathy ($r=0.501$, $p<0.01p$). $p<0.001$). Multiple regression analysis showed that emotional intelligence accounted for 48% of the variance in speaking accuracy and 52% of the variance in fluency measures. Students with higher levels of EI showed improved error correction, reduced speaking anxiety, and increased communicative confidence. These findings identify emotional intelligence as an important predictor of speaking success in English and suggest pedagogical implications for integrating emotional competence into language curricula.

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, English speaking ability, speaking accuracy, fluency, second language acquisition, communicative competence*

Introduction. Learning English as a foreign language is one of the most complex and challenging aspects of second language learning, requiring not only linguistic competence but also psychological preparation and emotional regulation [1]. Traditional approaches to EFL teaching have focused primarily on cognitive and linguistic factors, often neglecting the important role of emotional intelligence in determining speaking success and communicative effectiveness.

Emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own and others' emotions, has emerged as an important indicator of academic and professional success in a variety of fields [3]. In the context of second language acquisition, emotional intelligence encompasses important competencies, including anxiety management, motivational regulation, empathetic communication, and social adaptation—all essential elements for effective oral communication in foreign language contexts [4].

EFL discourse complexity encompasses fluency, pragmatic coherence, and communicative confidence beyond simple grammatical accuracy and lexical complexity [5]. Research has consistently shown that emotional factors such as speech anxiety, self-confidence, and interpersonal sensitivity significantly influence

learners' willingness to communicate and their overall speaking ability [6]. However, comprehensive empirical studies examining the specific relationships between measures of emotional intelligence and measurable speaking outcomes remain limited.

Contemporary pedagogical approaches increasingly recognize the importance of affective factors in language learning, with greater emphasis on creating emotionally supportive learning environments and developing learners' emotional competencies as well as their linguistic abilities [7]. This holistic perspective recognizes that successful communication requires not only technical skills, but also emotional awareness, social sensitivity, and adaptive coping strategies [8].

This study addresses important gaps in current understanding by systematically examining the relationships between specific emotional intelligence components and objectively measured measures of speech accuracy and fluency. By establishing empirical links between emotional competencies and speech ability, this study aims to provide an evidence-based framework for more comprehensive EFL pedagogical approaches that integrate emotional and linguistic development.

Literature Review. The intersection of emotional intelligence and second language proficiency has attracted scholarly attention, with researchers examining various dimensions of this complex relationship. The seminal work of Goleman and Bar-On has provided a comprehensive framework for understanding the components of emotional intelligence and applying them to educational contexts [9]. Their research identified five core dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, each of which contributes uniquely to interpersonal effectiveness and academic achievement.

A recent study by Chen and Martinez [10] examined the impact of emotional intelligence on oral communication anxiety among EFL learners. A study of 180 university students found that higher emotional intelligence scores were associated with reduced speech anxiety and increased willingness to engage in oral communication activities. The study found that students with better emotional skills showed greater resilience in communicative situations and maintained higher motivation over a longer study period.

The relationship between emotional regulation and fluency has been extensively studied by Anderson et al. [11], who conducted a longitudinal study with 150 intermediate EFL students over two academic years. Their findings showed that students with higher emotional regulation had more consistent speech performance during oral communication tasks, fewer hesitations, and improved repair strategies. The study highlighted the importance of emotional stability in maintaining the cognitive resources needed for fluent speech production.

Cross-cultural research by Kim and Patel [12] examined how cultural background influences the relationship between emotional intelligence and English speaking ability. A comparative study of East Asian and European students found significant cultural differences in the expression of emotions and their association with measures of speech accuracy. The study highlighted the need for culturally sensitive approaches to developing emotional intelligence in different EFL learning contexts.

A neuropsychological study by Rodriguez and Thompson [13] examined the cognitive mechanisms underlying the effects of emotional intelligence on second language speaking. Using EEG and fMRI techniques, they demonstrated that emotionally intelligent learners exhibited more efficient neural processing patterns during speaking tasks, reduced activation in brain regions associated with anxiety, and enhanced connectivity between language processing and executive control areas.

Research Methodology. This study used a correlational research design to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence components and EFL speaking performance. The methodology included validated assessment instruments and standardized procedures to

ensure reliable and valid measurement of emotional abilities and speaking skills.

Participants. The study included 240 intermediate EFL students (120 males, 120 females) aged 19–24 years from six universities in an urban setting. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure demographic representation and equivalent proficiency levels. Inclusion criteria required at least two years of formal English language instruction, an intermediate proficiency certificate, and voluntary consent to participate. Exclusion criteria excluded students with a diagnosis of emotional disorders or experience in an English-speaking country.

Instruments. Emotional intelligence was measured using the validated Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i 2.0) using 133 items assessing five core competencies: self-awareness, self-expression, interpersonal relationships, decision-making, and stress management. The instrument demonstrates strong psychometric properties with reliability coefficients ranging from 0.84 to 0.91 across subscales.

Speaking ability was assessed using the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Speaking Test format adapted for the study purposes. Assessment criteria included measures of grammatical accuracy, lexical relevance, pronunciation accuracy, and fluency. Three trained raters independently rated all speaking samples using standardized rubrics, and inter-rater reliability coefficients were above 0.88.

Analysis and Results

The comprehensive statistical analysis reveals substantial relationships between emotional intelligence components and EFL speaking performance indicators. The findings demonstrate consistent patterns across multiple emotional competencies and speaking dimensions, providing strong empirical support for the theoretical connection between emotional abilities and communicative effectiveness.

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis

Participants demonstrated moderate to high levels across emotional intelligence dimensions, with mean scores ranging from 3.42 to 4.18 on a 5-point scale. Speaking performance scores showed normal distribution patterns, with accuracy measures averaging 6.8/10 and fluency indicators reaching 7.2/10. Internal consistency reliability coefficients exceeded acceptable thresholds for all measured constructs.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Self-Awareness	3.87	0.62	(.89)						
2. Self-Regulation	3.65	0.71	.54**	(.91)					
3.Motivation	4.18	0.58	.61**	.48**	(.87)				
4. Empathy	3.42	0.79	.43**	.39**	.52**	(.84)			
5. Social Skills	3.76	0.66	.57**	.62**	.59**	.46**	(.88)		
6. Speaking Accuracy	6.81	1.24	.67**	.61**	.72**	.58**	.69**	(.92)	
7. Speaking Fluency	7.23	1.18	.63**	.59**	.74**	.52**	.71**	.78**	(.90)

Note: N = 240. Cronbach's alpha coefficients appear in parentheses on the diagonal. *p < .05, **p < .01

Correlation Analysis Results

Pearson correlation analysis reveals significant positive relationships between all emotional intelligence components and both speaking accuracy and fluency measures. Motivation demonstrates the strongest correlation with speaking accuracy (r=0.72, p<0.001), while social skills show the highest

association with speaking fluency (r=0.71, p<0.001). These findings indicate that emotionally intelligent learners consistently outperform their peers across multiple speaking dimensions.

Table 2. Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Speaking Performance from Emotional Intelligence Components

Predictor Variable	Speaking Accuracy			Speaking Fluency		
	β	t	p	β	t	p
Self-Awareness	.28**	4.12	.001	.19*	2.84	.005
Self-Regulation	.15*	2.31	.022	.17*	2.65	.008
Motivation	.34**	5.67	.000	.41**	6.89	.000
Empathy	.21**	3.45	.001	.14*	2.28	.024
Social Skills	.26**	3.89	.000	.32**	4.81	.000
R^2	**.48**		**.000**	**.52**		**.000**

*p < .05, **p < .01

Conclusion. This comprehensive investigation establishes emotional intelligence as a critical determinant of EFL speaking accuracy and fluency, with significant implications for second language pedagogy and learner development. The study demonstrates robust correlations between emotional competencies and speaking performance indicators, with emotional intelligence accounting for approximately 50% of variance in speaking outcomes. High-EI learners consistently outperformed peers across accuracy measures, fluency indicators, and qualitative communicative strategies. Motivation and social skills emerged as particularly influential predictors of speaking success. The findings reveal that emotionally intelligent learners employ more sophisticated error correction mechanisms, demonstrate greater communicative risk-taking, and maintain superior conversational flow. These results suggest that EFL curricula should integrate systematic emotional intelligence development alongside traditional linguistic instruction to optimize speaking performance outcomes and enhance overall communicative competence.

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