

The effectiveness of Emotional -Intelligence-Based Activities in Developing Primary- Stage- Students' EFLSpeaking Skill

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of Emotional -Intelligence-Based(EQ) Activities in Developing Primary- Stage-Students' EFL Speaking Skill. To achieve that target some procedures were followed and some tools were used :1- a pre –post tests were used to check the effectiveness the proposed activities which based on Emotional Intelligence.2- Teachers' survey was conducted to collect data about the ways teachers adapted in teaching speaking skill as one of the main skills of the language.3-the proposed EQ based activities which expected to lead to improving sixth graders' speaking skill. The study sample consisted of 48 of sixth grader experimental school students .For the purpose of the study the pre-post test one group design was used. The results of the study show that there is a statistically significance difference between the mean scores of the students in favor of the post test, also the MG test =0.66 refers to the effectiveness of the proposed activities.

Keywords : Speaking Skill, Emotional Intelligence, Self Awareness, Self Regulation,Empathy ,Relationships Regulation,

فاعلية أنشطة قائمة على الذكاء العاطفي لتنمية مهارة التحدث بالإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية لدى طلاب المرحلة الابتدائية

المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الي تقصي اثر أنشطة قائمة علي الذكاء العاطفي في تحسين مهارة التحدث لدي طلاب المرحلة الابتدائية. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف بنيت ثلاثة ادوات :١- استبيان للمعلمين للوقوف علي طرق تدريس مهارة التحدث لطلاب المرحلة الابتدائية كأدمهارات اللغة الانجليزية الاساسية. ٢- اجراء اختبار قبلي واختبار بعدي لفحص مدي تأثير الأنشطة القائمة علي الذكاء العاطفي في تحسين مهارة التحدث لدي طلاب المرحلة الابتدائية. ٣- مجموعة من الأنشطة القائمة علي الذكاء العاطفي لتحسين مهارة التحدث باللغة الانجليزية لدي طلاب الصف السادس الابتدائي.

تكونت عينة الدراسة من ٤٨ من طلاب الصف السادس الابتدائي بمدرسة الغرفة التجارية الامريكية الرسمية لغات بالمرج.

وقد اظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود فروق ذات دلالة احصائية لصالح الاختبار البعدي مما يشير الي فاعلية أنشطة قائمة علي الذكاء في تحسين اداء الطلاب في التحدث باللغة الانجليزية. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** مهارة التحدث، الذكاء العاطفي، الوعي الذاتي، التنظيم الذاتي، التعاطف، تنظيم العلاقات،

Introduction

Language is the primary source of communication. It is the method or tool through which people share their ideas and thoughts with others. There is a bad need for a global language to make international communications more smoother. These days English is viewed as a language which gives access to the world. It is widely spoken, therefore it has been referred to as a “world language”. English language is considered the most widespread language all over the world. It is the international language of diplomacy, trade, tourism, medicine and most sciences. That is why everyone needs to learn English in order to get in touch on an international level. Consequently, it is necessary to master its main four major skills reading, writing, listening, and speaking as well as the varied sub skills. Speaking, as one of the productive skills, helps people communicate with otherse from countries all over the world, not just English speaking ones. Speaking is the active use of language to express meaning.

Speaking skill is considered as the most important skill of all language skills as it is used in people’s daily activities. Baron (2020), states that speaking was a process of producing meaning through various stages, including production, reception, and processing of information, making it an interactive process. On the other hand, Gillis (2013) states that having the ability to speak skillfully provides the speaker with many important advantages. These advantages are the ability to inform, persuade, and direct. Also, the ability to stand out from the rest, and the ability to benefit derivatively. According to Mishra (2017) Speaking skill is the ability to express opinions or thoughts and feelings to a person or group verbally, whether face or by distance. Rahayu(2015)shows that language is not only a means of human communication but also one of the most significant facets of the human experience .

Speaking skill enhances one's personal life. It helps students produce those unites of meaning in phrases and clauses, not just word by word. Speaking is an interactive process of conversation that involves producing, receiving and processing information. To master Speaking educators or schools should focus on both methods and psychology. Therefore, psychology represented in stress, fear, embarrassment, self esteem, self confidence etc. plays vital role in mastering speaking and learning in general.

As schools focus just on methods, they completely ignore psychological parts. Yet, psychology is probably considered as the most important element for success with English speaking. Although role of emotions in human life has a considerable theoretical background and different philosophers have mentioned it in their works including Aristotle, Spinoza, Kant, Dewey, Bergson, Russell (Amini et al, 2009). Thibaut Meurisse deduces that" emotion can make your life miserable or truly magical. Emotions color all the experiences. When you feel good , everything seems, feels, or tastes better. you also think better thoughts. Your energy levels are higher and possibilities seem limitless. When you think of your own English speaking, you'll realize that your nervousness, lack of confidence, and frustration are major problems. if you have connected stress, fear, nervousness, and doubt to the process of speaking English you will have a lot of problem, and this is exactly what happens in most schools. The type of tests, the improper feedback and the boring and ineffective methods used in schools combine to create powerful negative emotions in most students. Such passive and negative emotions largely effect the student way of learning, weather the method of teaching and learning. .A. J Hoge(2014,P.22) argues" if your psychology is weak, even the best method will fail". Emotions can be a very valuable tool in guiding our choices and decision-making (Steven Handel, 2014, P.3).

Statement of the problem

The sixth graders have poor performance in their speaking skills. This problem may be attributed to the psychological barriers and negative emotions .As frustration, anxiety, hesitation, embarrassment , stress, afraid of making mistakes , lack the ability of decision making ,lack of self confidence, absence of motivation as well as self esteem. Therefore, through this study, the researcher attempts to explore and investigate whether emotional intelligence based activities will develop sixth graders speaking skill.

Research Questions

Therefore, this study seeks to find an answer to the following main **question:**

What is the effectiveness of emotional intelligence based activities in developing sixth graders' speaking skills?

To answer the above main question, the following subsidiary questions will be answered:

- 1.What is the status quo of teaching speaking in Egypt?
- 2.What are the features of emotional intelligence based activities which will promote sixth- graders' speaking skills?
- 3.What are the emotional intelligence based activities expected to improve students' English speaking skills?

Hypotheses

- 1.There is a statistically significance difference between the mean score of the study participants in the pre post-testes which examine the improvement of speaking performance as whole, in the favor of the post test.
- 2.There is a statistically significance difference between the mean score of the study participants in the pre post-testes which examine the improvement of each speaking skill, in the favor of post test.

Significance of the study

It is expected that the study will be of value to:

- 1.Primary stage students: This study is expected to assist in preparing a well qualified critical thinking and problem solving students who will be able to speak more confidently.
- 2.EFL researcher: This study will present a theoretical background that can be utilized by EFL researchers in future studies.
- 3.Teachers of English and schools administration: This study will provide them with more activities and techniques to deal with students' different behaviors and negative emotions.
- 4.Curriculum developers and designers: They will be provided with some activities and techniques that enhance students' speaking skills which could be included in the future curriculum.

Delimitations of the study

This study will be delimited to:

- 1.A group of sixth graders.
- 2.Some emotional intelligence activities which are relevant to the aim of the study.
- 3.Some speaking skills proper to sixth graders.

Literature Review

Speaking skill is mainly the skill refers to using language to communicate verbally or with nonverbal symbols. Speaking is one of the four main skills (reading, writing ,listening and speaking).In this regard, speaking is considered as a productive skill and most important one of all. It has so many importance. Speaking skill has may definitions, scientists give it different views, each relating to how he viewed language. Dewi R & Armadi, A (2016) state that speaking is one of the essential communication and added that there were a lot of similarities and obstacles encountered by the learners in speaking English such as

being afraid of making mistakes or being laughed at by their peers. Putra (2020) reveals that speaking skills are essential part of the curriculum in teaching the language.

Problems with speaking teaching

Ariyani (2018) says that speaking is ignored by teachers in the classroom as well as students because speaking is not part of the national examination in schools. On the other side, teachers also ignore speaking skills in their classes because it needs more time and students' reluctance to speak in English is also another reason. If we more focus to get the reasons of why students fail to speak English language in schools or classroom , it will be clear that the reason is because they do not have enough exposure and resources ,or the lack of motivation and willingness. Sometimes, some students struggle to speak in English because their teachers prefer to stick to traditional ways of teaching. That tendency prevent students from proper effective means of learning and practicing. Ngyuen (2018) assures that a few number of learners who have confidence and self-direction can actually speak in English, whereas those who don't find opportunity to speak later face anxiety issue which, afterwards, affects their fluency.

English language learners often encounter various challenges when developing their speaking skills. One significant challenge is the fear of making mistakes, which can inhibit learners' willingness to engage

in conversations (Zheng, et al., 2019). Furthermore, lack of confidence in pronunciation and fluency may lead to speaking anxiety. Research by MacIntyre et al. (2019) emphasizes that learners may face challenges related to the accuracy of their spoken language, including grammatical errors and vocabulary limitations. Additionally, learners from non-native English-speaking backgrounds may struggle with the pronunciation of English sounds and the rhythm of speech. These

challenges underscore the importance of creating a supportive and low-anxiety learning environment and implementing effective strategies to address learners' specific needs.

Emotional Intelligence

The two American University professors Dr. John Mayer and Dr. Peter Salovey were considered the first who coined the term of emotional intelligence in their attempt to develop a scientific measure for knowing the differences in people's abilities in the areas of emotion. EI has clear theoretical links to the continued experience of positive emotions as well as the management of interpersonal relationships and can therefore be considered a key concept within positive psychology (Salovey, Mayer & Caruso, 2002).

However, the credit for popularizing the concept of emotional intelligence goes to another American psychologist Daniel Goleman (1995). The concept of emotional intelligence has gained popularity and accepted over in the recent years. The ability to appropriately identify, recognize and manage your emotions for one's own well being as well as the well-being of people around you is what is described as emotional intelligence.

Following the groundbreaking book by Goleman, author Travis Bradberry and his colleague Jean Greaves capitalized on the growing interest in emotional intelligence and published their own book, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, which outlines a step by step program for enhancing it. Bradberry and Greaves propose 66 evidence backed strategies to build emotional intelligence by teaching self awareness, self management, social awareness, and relationship management. Majid.E.sh. & Samira. R. (2016, P.3) Recently, Bowkett and Percival (2010) proposed a model of emotional intelligence consisting of two main elements; awareness of self and awareness of others.

Emotional Intelligence skills



Research Method

To assess the effectiveness of EQ –based activities on the improvement of sixth graders’ speaking skill, an intervention was needed. In this intervention, the one group pretest –posttest was used. This design is a pre-experimental design in which no control group is used. The use of no control group is due to the difficulty of using two matched groups either in intelligence, previous language experience, or social background. In this, comparing the mean scores of the pretest with the mean scores of the posttest was used to determine how far the independent variable (which is Eq based activities) affected the dependent variable (in this study, the sixth graders’ speaking skill).

participants

The subject of this study were 48 participants. They were all sixth graders in The American Chamber Experimental Official Language School at El- Marg, Cairo,Egypt. They were all living in the school surroundings. All the students studied English for six years.

Procedures

These procedures were followed:

- 1.Designing a list of speaking skills appropriate to six graders .This will be through reviewing the previous studies and literature related to speaking skill.
- 2.Designing speaking skills pre-test.
- 3.Administering speaking skills pre-test to determine the current situation of the study participants' speaking skills.
- 4.Selecting emotional intelligence activities that can improve sixth graders' speaking skills according to EQ skills as well as speaking skills.
- 5.Conducting a teacher survey to identify teachers' practices and beliefs related to teaching speaking.
- 6.Administering a post – test to identify the effectiveness of the emotional intelligence based activities in developing sixth graders' speaking performance .
- 7.Designing a rubric of speaking performance skills to check the students' performance.
- 8.Interpreting and discussing the results quantitatively and qualitatively.
- 9.Writing conclusion of the results of the study.
- 10.Presenting suggestions and recommendations.

Data analysis

To verify the hypotheses of this study T- test was used to compare the mean scores of the participants in pre-test and post –test.

First hypothesis proposed that :

There is a statistically significance difference between the mean score of the study participants in the pre post-testes which examine the improvement of each speaking skill, in the favor of post test.

To investigate the results to this hypothesis a T- test was used to examine the results for each skill:

1. Fluency

Paired t test

Fluency	N	Minimum	Maximum	M±SD	P value t- test
Pre-Test	48	2	3	2.458 ± 0.5035	<0.0001 t=38
Post-Test	48	3	5	4.458 ± 0.5819	

According to the results of the above table it is clear that the M of the participants in the post test is greater than theirs in the pre –test

$$M = 4.45 > 2.45$$

In favor of the post-test

2. Pronunciation

Pronunciation	N	Minimum	Maximum	M±SD	P value t- test
Pre-Test	48	1	3	1.729 ± 0.5355	<0.0001 t=21.55
Post-Test	48	2	5	2.813 ± 0.6410	

According to the results explained in the above table , it was clear that M is in favor of the post – test of the participants:

$$M = 2.813 > 1.729$$

In favor of the post- test

3. Vocabs

Vocabs	N	Minimum	Maximum	M±SD	P value t- test
Pre-Test	48	2	3	2.708 ± 0.4593	<0.0001 t=21.46
Post-Test	48	3	5	3.875 ± 0.3928	

With regard to the results it seems that the M of participants' vocabs is greater in favor of the post –test

M= 3.8> 2.7 in favor of the post –test

4. Grammar

Gram	N	Minimum	Maximum	M±SD	P value t- test
Pre-Test	48	1	3	2.125 ± 0.5310	<0.0001 t=21.62
Post-Test	48	2	4	3.208 ± 0.6174	

To check the grammar advance as well as comparing the mean score of participants 'grammar skill , T- test results showed that the participants mean score in the post- test is greater than the pre- test.

M= 3.2> 2.1 in favor of the the post- test.

The participants results for each of the skills referred to the positive effect of the EQ-based activities in developing the students' skills.

To check the second hypothesis: 2. There is a statistically significance difference between the mean score of the study participants in the pre post-testes which examine the improvement of speaking performance as whole, in the favor of the post test.

A T- test was used to compare the mean scores of the participants in the pre-post tests

Total

Total	N	Minimum	Maximum	M±SD	P value t- test
Pre-Test	48	6	12	8.979 ± 1.509	<0.0001 t=56.32
Post-Test	48	10	17	14.27 ± 1.735	

According to the results displayed in the above table there was a statistically asignificance difference in the mean score of the participants in favor of the total skills mean score of the post –test.

$$M = 14.27 > 8.97$$

Such results refers to the significance of the EQ- based activities in developing students' speaking sub- skills and the speaking skill as whole.

To answer the study questions the researcher followed some procedures.

To answer the first question: 1. What is the status quo of teaching speaking in Egypt? A teachers' survey was conducted:

Results yielded by teachers' survey

Asking respondent teachers wether they thought that teachers have more attention to their students' speaking skill , and 64% percent acswered with “Yes” , 0% answered “No” ,36 % answered “Sometimes” (figure 1). The responces of the of the surveyed teachers consistent with the study assumption that the students' poor ability of speaking skill may be return to other reasons beyond the class study or practices.

The second question in the survey was do teachers have an actual interest in improving their students' speaking abilities. Their responces were as following: 60% answered “yes”, 4% answered “no”, and 36% answered “sometimes” (figure 2). Such results refer to the same problem the students poor speaking ability has some other roots far from having actual speaking skills abilities.

Question three was designed to get more information about teachers' actual practices relating to speaking skill compared to other class skills. They were asked if they teaching speaking receives the same interest in the class as teaching grammar, 56% of them answered “yes”, 4% answered “no”, 40% answered “sometimes”. The response for that

question indicates that teaching speaking inside the class highly served comparing to the results of “yes” and “sometimes”.

In question four the surveyed teachers asked whether they should devote part of the session for speaking practice, the results were in that way 64% answered “yes”, 0% answered “no”, 36% answered “sometimes”.

Question five checked teachers’ beliefs and coventions relating whether their students should have the ability to speak easily and fluently, 60% answered “yes”, 0% answered “no”, 40% answered “sometimes”.

To provide the study with information about teachers’ awareness of their students psychological aspect , they were asked this question wether teachers should accept some grammar or spelling mistakes from their students at beginning as a way of building students self confidence, the answers were 4% answered “ yes” ,68 % answered “no” , 28% answered “sometimes”. Such data provide a starting point to the present study.

Question seven provides data about teachers’conventions of their students actual abilities, their answers were 64% answered “yes”, 0% answered “no” ,36% answered “ sometimes”.

Results for the second question

The second question was:

What are the features of emotional intelligence based activities which will promote sixth- graders' speaking skills?

To answer this question, according to literature review and investigation (chapter II) the activities should be consistent with emotional intelligence skills. EQ skills are:

1. Self- awareness
2. Self- regulation
3. Empathy: recognizing emotions in others
4. Motivation: self motivation

5. Social skills: handling relationships

Thus these activities should cover these areas the ability to:

1. Identify what you are feeling
2. Know how to interpret your emotions
3. Understand how your emotions impact and influence others
4. Regulate your own emotions
5. Manage other people's emotions

These activities have main target:

The goal is to boost students' emotional intelligence. Thus, they able to keep these seven tips in their mind:

- Reflect on his own emotions;
- Ask others for perspective;
- Be observant (of own emotions);
- Use "the pause" (e.g., taking a moment to think before speaking);
- Explore the "why" (bridge the gap by taking someone else's perspective);
- When criticized, don't take offense. Instead, ask: What can I learn?

Teacher can follow these procedures:

IF a teacher is looking for enhancing the Emotional Intelligence of the class or group ,he should keep these tips in mind

- Have a ring leader;
- Identify group members' strengths and weaknesses;
- Spark passion;
- Build group norms;
- Develop creative ways to manage stress;
- Allow group members to have a voice;
- Encourage students to work and play together

Results of the third question of the study

What are the emotional intelligence based activities expected to improve students' English speaking skills?

Answering this question meant coming to the final version of the activities as presented to the students. This was done through the the following steps:

1. Reviewing the literature and related studies in EQ.
2. Designing these activities according to the principles of ministry of education in Egypt for teaching English in Experimental Language primary schools.
3. Suitability of the activities to the age of the target population (sixth primary Experimental Language pupils)
4. Relevancy of the suggested activities to EQ theory

Results of the fourth question of the study:

The fourth question was:

What is the effectiveness of the proposed activities in developing sixth- graders' speaking skills?

To verify that question an MC-Gugian test was applied to check the effectiveness of these applied activities. The results yielded were:

MC-Gugian= 0.66

That result clearly explain that the applied activities were effective in improving the Sixth Graders' performance.

Suggestions:

From the results yielded from that study, the researcher suggests some recommendation to those who can benefit from the study:

Teachers: the researcher suggests that teachers can use the list of applied activities to enhance and improve their students self management,

resilience, responsibility , self awareness as well as working in healthy atmosphere . teachers can use the activities or make some slight changes to make it more proper to the context.

Students: If the taught those activities they are going to be more aware of themselves, more able to manage their abilities to be more successful and productive, have the ability to work in a healthy teamwork atmosphere , able to manage conflicts and have better relationships.

Ministry of Education: ministry of education can make use of that program by applying in schools to build students' awareness as well as empower them with life skills they need to be more successful and focused in life.

Researchers: They can use the study as a reference to conduct more investigation on that area.

Parents:parents can benefit from the study results to help their kids be more aware of themselves and others.

Definition of Terms

Emotional Intelligence

According to Travis Bradberry & Jean Greaves (2009, P.17) "Emotional intelligence is your ability to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and others, and your ability to use this awareness to manage your behavior and relationships". Daniel Goleman (2012,P.71)

" emotional intelligence: abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hop.

Speaking Performance Operational Definition

Speaking is an interactive process of conversation that involves producing, receiving and processing information (Brown,1994; Burns &Joyce,1997).

Speaking helps students produce those unites of meaning in phrases and clauses ,not just word by word (GruberMiller,2006).

Self Awareness

Self- awareness is your ability to accurately perceive your own emotions in the moment and understand your tendencies across situations. Self- awareness includes staying on top of your typical reactions to specific events, challenges, and people (Bradberry& Greaves.2009, P.24). Navneet singh (2019) states that high emotional intelligence in a person makes him extremely self-aware. People could comprehend their own emotions and keep their feelings in control while making important decisions of life.

Self Management

Self management is ability to use your awareness of your emotions to stay flexible and direct your behavior positively. This means managing your emotional reactions to situations and people (Bradberry& Greaves. 2009).

Motivation

J.E.Ormrod defines motivation as an internal state that arouses us to action, pushes us in particular direction and keeps us engaged in certain

Activities Social Awareness or Empathy

Navneet Singh (2019) says that another vital element of emotional intelligence is empathy that empowers people to identify the emotional side of others, around them, without being judgmental and stereotype.

They are excellent at managing human relationships by understanding other's outlook and even the unobvious feelings.

Relationships Management

Relationship management is your ability to use your awareness of your own emotions and those of others to manage interactions successfully. This ensures clear communication and effective handling of conflict. Relationship management is also the bond you build with others over time. People who manage relationships well are able to see the benefit of connecting with many different people, even those they are not fond of (Bradberry&Greaves.2009, P.44).

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