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MA Thesis Entitled

The Relationship between Iranian EFL Learners' Emotional intelligence and their Use of Listening metacognitive strategies across Gender

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English Language Teaching

By

Hassan Mollahossein

Supervisor

Dr. Parviz Alavinia

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Date: ……....

To the Graduate Council of Urmia University:

Hereby we are submitting a thesis written by **Hassan Mollahossein** entitled "**The Relationship between Iranian EFL Learners' EI and the Use of Listening metacognitive strategies Across Gender**". We have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT).

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Dr. Parviz Alavinia

Thesis Supervisor

As examining body, we have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

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External Examiner Internal Examiner

_____

…….

Representative from Post-graduate Council of Urmia University

In the Name of God,

the Most

Kind and the Most

Merciful

Dedicated to:

My Mother and

All Whom I Love

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Surname: Mollahossein **Name: Hassan**

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between listening metacognitive strategies and emotional intelligence and its components among university English learners across gender. One hundred and twenty male and female students at the age range of 18-28 from Urmia University, Urmia Azad University and Salams Azad University participated in the study. The participants majored in English literature, TEFL and in English translation. The listening comprehension part of the TOEFL test was given to learners and they were homogenized according to their scores. Then Bar-On's (1997) emotional intelligence questionnaire, as well as a questionnaire of listening metacognitive strategies use, was also given to them. Statistical analyses revealed a significant relationship between a) total emotional intelligence score and the use of metacognitive strategies; b) each of the four scales of emotional intelligence (Intrapersonal skills, Interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management, and general mood) and use of metacognitive strategies of listening; c) all of the 5 scales of emotional intelligence and the use of monitoring strategy; d) interpersonal skills and evaluating strategy; e) interpersonal skills, adaptability, and general mood and planning strategy. Among the scales which had a significant relationship with the use of

metacognitive strategies, interpersonal skills had the greatest predictive power for the use of listening metacognitive strategies. Also, it was found that gender did not affect the relationship between emotional intelligence and use of listening metacognitive strategies.

For correspondence with the researcher:
E-mail: Hassanmollahossein@yahoo.com

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List of abbreviations

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
EI	Emotional Intelligence
EQ	Emotional Quotient
SILL	Strategy Inventory for Language Learning
EQ-I	Emotional Quotient Inventory
SEIS	Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale
ECI	Emotional Competence Inventory
EI-IPIP	Emotional Intelligence-based IPIP-Scales
TEIQue	Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire
MI	Multiple Intelligences
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
ECI	Emotional Competency Inventory
ESCI	Emotional and Social Competency Inventory

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Learners bring with them different backgrounds and individual differences into learning process. Learning a second language is not an exception. The variety of factors in learning a second language is now well recognized. One of these individual differences is intelligence.

When speaking about intelligence, the most dominant and easy-to-access term that bears in mind, is the concept which relates to rational and cognitive aspects of mind; those which are measured and expressed through intelligence quotient (IQ). This concept is more related to the representation of the mathematical and logical features of human mind. But most of the human activities and determinations such as the ability to dance or the ability to create relationship with other people need something more than mere mathematical and logical intelligence. Considering the need, the concept of Multiple Intelligences (MI) has been coined by Gardner (1983). Gardner's theory divides human intelligence into musical, linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences.

Two of these seven intelligences, interpersonal and intrapersonal ones, seem to be related to psychological aspects of human beings. "Interpersonal intelligence "more generically covers the individual's attempts to understand another person's behavior, motives, and/or emotions" (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2002). Intrapersonal intelligence helps us understand ourselves, know who we are, understand why we behave the way we do, and how we can change ourselves into becoming a more fulfilled person given the constraints of our abilities and interests (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2002). The two recently mentioned intelligences are a part of a broader concept called emotional Intelligence (EI). It refers to the ability to recognize and manage emotions in ourselves and in other people. Goleman who was one of the prominent scientists in the field of psychology has defined emotional intelligence as "abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustration, to control impulses and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swapping the ability to think; to emphasize and to hope" (1995, p. 34). Goleman (1995) proposed five key areas for this subject: knowing one's emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others and handling relationships. Later, he revised his first definition of emotional intelligence and classified the

emotional intelligence into twenty-five different emotional competencies (Goleman, 1998). Bar-On (2000) defines EI as a group of emotional and social knowledge and skills. He defines five main areas for EI:

1. Intrapersonal skills (self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-actualization)
2. Interpersonal skills (empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationships)
3. Adaptability (reality testing, flexibility, and problem solving)
4. Stress management (stress tolerance and impulse control)
5. General mood (optimism and happiness)

EI is considered to be more powerful than IQ in predicting success in life challenges, in distinguishing successful people within job categories or profession (Goleman, 1995). If success is so much related to EI, then education and learning that are some aspects of life which result in success or failure, are related to EI too. Language learning and teaching are concepts that depend on psychological factors both in learners and teachers. Thus, possible links can be found between emotional intelligence and language learning/teaching. Although, it is tempting to conceive IQ as the dominant and the only factor in predicting success in language learning and generally in education, it will be a great loss to ignore the role of EI in the process.

Second language acquisition has been viewed as a complex cognitive process by cognitive psychologists as learners implement some cognitive strategies during this process. As the studies show, not only do learners use cognitive strategies, but also they monitor and control their own mental processes (Pintrich, 1999), which are referred to as metacognitive strategies that are involved in learning and using language.

Oxford (1990) divided learning strategies even to a broader and more comprehensive dichotomy, in which there are four other strategies other than cognitive and metacognitive strategies; learning strategies in Oxford's taxonomy are composed of direct (memory, cognitive, and compensation) and indirect (social, affective and metacognitive) strategies. She indicates that direct and indirect strategies bolster one another (Oxford, 1990). O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have divided strategies to four categories of Cognitive, Metacognitive, Social and Affective Strategies. Among these strategies using metacognitive ones by the learners has a great role in their success in learning language, as far as they use them for planning, monitoring and evaluation of their learning procedure.

It was Flavell (1979) who coined the term 'metacognition', and defined 'metacognitive knowledge' as "consisting primarily of an understanding or perception of the ways in which different factors act and interact to affect the course and outcome of the cognitive enterprise" (cited in Goh, 1997, p. 362). In like manner, Oxford (1990) believes that "metacognitive strategies help learners manage: (1) themselves as learners, (2) the general learning process, and (3) specific learning tasks" (cited in Carter & Nunan, 2001, p. 197). Simply put, "metacognition is thinking about thinking" (Flavell, 1979, p. 906). O'Malley and Chamot (1990), indicate that metacognitive strategies are "higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring or evaluating the success of a learning activity" (p. 44). Oxford (1990) divides metacognitive strategies into three categories of 'centering learning', 'arranging and planning learning' and evaluating learning. Although there seems to be various taxonomies in dividing metacognitive strategies, all of them share three components of 'Planning', 'Monitoring' and 'Evaluating'.

EI and strategies mentioned above are among individual differences and individual preferences of learners in acquiring language and its skills. But to relate these two factors to language learning something seems to be missing, that is input, without which no learning or acquisition takes place. Listening and reading are two input providing channels for learning process. Regarding the development of technology and communication mediums, the aural input is more available for learners of languages, such as satellite programs and internet. Thus, listening rather than reading, can play a more crucial role in providing input. Hence studying the problems and efficiencies as well as deficiencies of the learners in listening can provide a guide for teaching and learning a language. Studying listening metacognitive strategies in learners, considering their emotional intelligence, can result in finding new methods of teaching listening with regard to individual differences of the learners.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As listening is an important medium of providing input for learners of English, finding optimum ways of teaching listening is a challenging task for teachers and researchers of language learning and teaching. One of the channels of searching the optimum methods is studying listening

metacognitive strategies. While research on strategies of second language learning has increased in recent years, studies in listening comprehension is so small and the base for research in listening comprehension strategies is even so limited (Rubin, 1994). Recent studies carried out on the effective and less effective listeners, considering differences between their uses of strategies, indicates the important role of metacognitive strategies in success in language listening (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Vandergrift, 1997b). Thus, finding methods of making learners aware of their use of metacognitive strategies and trying to improve their use will help them in enhancing their listening ability. The better the use of listening metacognitive strategies, the more the absorption of aural input, hence language learning becomes more successful. Considering that listening is a key part of language learning, more attention should be paid to it and the methods of better presenting and absorbing it, regarding individual differences of the learners should be focused on, a phenomenon that is totally ignored specially in universities and school context. One of these numerous individual differences of the learners is their emotional intelligence.

A great part of the recently done research has specified that rational and cognitive mind is the focus of current educational systems and little attention is paid to emotional mind and its important role in learning (Nelson & Low, 2003). Compared with other courses such as mathematics, learning English and generally learning language may be more related to emotional intelligence and it needs to be studied more. Especially, in Iranian context, individual differences such as emotional intelligence and gender play almost no role in teaching and learning system and they are totally ignored. In spite of numerous studies regarding the role of IQ in academic achievement, a few ones have been done on the role of EI in strategies used by learners. Especially, strategies used in verbal skills (speaking and listening) and also the role of EI and metacognitive strategies (better to say psychological aspects) have been ignored by researchers.

As indicated above, emotional intelligence is almost a new field of study in EFL context and most studies conducted in this field, connecting emotional intelligence to learning strategies, deal with all skills together and all strategies, and a few studies have aimed at connecting emotional intelligence to metacognitive strategies of one single skill and investigating the potential relationship between them. The current study is after finding the potential relationship between

EI and using listening metacognitive strategies, and in so doing, heed will also be given to the role of gender differences.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Iranian students begin learning English from the beginning of junior high school and it is taught in higher levels of education, in high-schools and in universities. Although the most important skill they need to obtain in English is reading and it is emphasized in educational system of Iran, it will be a forfeiture to put aside one of the important channels of obtaining information, the aural channel. Besides, the development of technology and computer offers us more and more access to information and aural channel becomes more important because, multimedia is one of the greatest parts of modern technology. Thus, listening can be considered an important skill and it needs to be paid more attention. In recent years, the research on language learning and teaching has confirmed the critical role of input in language learning (e.g. Dunkel, 1991; Feyten, 1991), emphasizing the role of listening in teaching methods. In the case of university EFL students (English literature, translation and TEFL students), it becomes more significant, because these students are more probable to become English teachers in future and they will have to teach listening as one of the four skills of English. Thus, searching and finding better ways of teaching and learning listening to these students is so important. Using strategies of listening can help students better understand listening, and being aware of using these strategies can help them improve their strategies. By using metacognitive strategies learners plan, monitor and evaluate their listening process. Teaching these strategies can accelerate their learning how to listen. But their difference in emotional intelligence makes us treat them differently. Psychologists and researchers in the field of education believe that a healthy school climate needs attention to affective and emotional learning as much as cognitive and academic learning (Low, Lomax, Jackson, & Nelson, 2004). Considering that learners are different in emotional intelligence and personality, they may choose different metacognitive strategies for listening. Being aware of their preferences of these strategies, regarding their emotional intelligence, can help us in providing better ways of training them for listening tasks to bring about maximum absorption of aural input. Also, instructors can classify students into different groups of emotional intelligence and give them instructions to use metacognitive strategies in line with their emotional

intelligence. But studies in the realm of emotional intelligence and language learning are so rare. Some few studies have been conducted to find the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic success (e.g. Fahim, & Pishghadam, 2007); a few of the researchers have studied the relationship between learners' EI and using learning strategies (e.g. Hasanzadeh, & Shahmohamadi, 2011a), but almost no study have been conducted to investigate the relationship between EI and listening metacognitive strategies solely. This study tries to fill this gap

1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

According to the research aims, the research questions presented below are to be answered:

Q1: Is there a significant relationship between Iranian university EFL students' EQ and their use of listening metacognitive strategies?

Q2: Is there a significant relationship between Iranian university EFL students' emotional intelligence scales and use of listening metacognitive strategies of 'Planning', 'Monitoring' and 'Evaluating' ?

$Q2_a$. Is there any significant relationship between Iranian students' EI scales and their use of listening metacognitive strategy of 'Planning'?

Q2b. Is there any significant relationship between Iranian students' EI scales and their use of listening metacognitive strategy of 'Monitoring'?

Q2c. Is there any significant relationship between Iranian students' EI scales and their use of listening metacognitive strategy of 'evaluating'?

Q3: Which of the scales of emotional intelligence predicts the use of listening metacognitive strategies?

Q4: Is there a significant relationship between gender, EQ, and the use of listening metacognitive strategies?

Correspondingly the following hypotheses are formulated:

$H_0$1- There is no significant relationship between Iranian university EFL students' EQ and their use of listening metacognitive strategies

$H_0$2- There is no significant relationship between Iranian university EFL students' emotional intelligence scales and use of listening metacognitive strategies of 'Planning', 'Monitoring' and 'Evaluating' .

$H_0$2a: There is no significant relationship between Iranian university EFL students' EI scales and their use of listening metacognitive strategy of 'Planning'

$H_0$2b: There is no significant relationship between Iranian university EFL students' EI scales and their use of listening metacognitive strategy of 'Monitoring'.

$H_0$2c: There is no significant relationship between Iranian university EFL students' EI scales and their use of listening metacognitive strategy of 'Evaluating'.

$H_0$4- There is no significant relationship between gender, EQ, and the use of listening metacognitive strategies.

1.5 Definitions of the Key Terms

a) Emotional Intelligence:

Mayer and Salovey as the coiners of the term, defined emotional intelligence as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (1990, p. 189). Later they defined it as

> the ability to accurately perceive, evaluate and express emotions; the ability to have access to and/or to generate feelings which make thinking easier; the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and the ability to manage emotions by promoting emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 4).

b) Intrapersonal Intelligence:

Intrapersonal Intelligence is one scale of emotional intelligence which involves "the abilities to access one's own feeling life, to identify, label, and discriminate among one's feelings, and to