An Investigation into the Relationship between Learners' Emotional Intelligence and Willingness to Communicate in terms of gender in the Turkish EFL Classroom*

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence is effective in foreign language learning as well as in all areas of life. For this reason, this study was carried out to examine the relationship between the willingness to communicate and emotional intelligence of 120 students at the English Preparatory School of a foundation university in terms of gender. The Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Inventory (Bar-On, 2003) and the L2 Willingness to Communicate Scale (MacIntyre, et al., 2001) were used to collect data in the study. Statistical Package Software for Social Sciences (SPSS v.22) was utilized for data analysis, and independent sample t-tests and Pearson Correlation Analysis were used. According to the results, it was analyzed that female students outscored males in interpersonal skills and the subscales except willingness to speak in L2 differed between genders. According to the correlation analysis, although there was no negative correlation between any of the subscales of female students' emotional intelligence and willingness to communicate in a foreign language, (1) willingness to communicate and general mood, (2) willingness to speak and adaptability, (3) willingness to write and general mood, (4) a positive significant relationship was found between willingness to grasp and general mood. In terms of early learners, there was a negative correlation between (1) willingness to communicate and intrapersonal intelligence, (2) willingness to read and interpersonal intelligence, (3) willingness to write and EQ/interpersonal intelligence. In addition, positive correlations were found between several different subscales.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Willingness to Communicate, gender, English as a Foreign Language

Türkiye'deki Yabancı Dil olarak İngilizce Sınıflarında Cinsiyet Açısından Öğrencilerin Duygusal Zekası ve İletişim Kurma İstekliliği arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi*

Öz

Duygusal zekanın hayatın her alanında olduğu gibi yabancı dil öğreniminde de etkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu sebeple, bu çalışma bir vakıf üniversitesinin İngilizce Hazırlık Okulundaki 120 öğrencinin iletişim kurma istekliliği ve duygusal zekâları arasındaki ilişkiyi cinsiyet açısından incelemek amacıyla uygulanmıştır. Bar-On Duygusal Zekâ Envanteri (Bar-On, 2003) ve İkinci Dilde İletişim İstekliliği Ölçeği (MacIntyre, vd., 2001) çalışmada veri toplarken kullanılmıştır. Sosyal Bilimler için İstatistiksel Paket Yazılımı (SPSS v.22) veri analizi için kullanılmıştır ve bağımsız örneklem t-testleri ve Pearson Korelasyon Analizinden faydalanılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre, kişilerarası becerilerde kadın öğrencilerin erkeklerden daha iyi olduğu ve yabancı dilde konuşma istekliliğinin dışında kalan alt ölçeklerin cinsiyetler arası farklılık gösterdiği analiz edilmiştir. Korelasyon analizine göre ise kadın öğrencilerin duygusal zekanın ve yabancı dilde iletişim istekliliğinin hiçbir alt ölçeği arasında hiçbir negatif korelasyon bulunmamakla beraber (1) iletişim kurma istekliliği ve genel ruh hali, (2) konuşma istekliliği ve uyum, (3) yazma istekliliği ve genel ruh hali, (4) kavrama istekliliği ve genel ruh hali arasında pozitif anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Erken öğrenciler açısındansa (1) iletişim kurma istekliliği ve içsel zekâ, (2) okuma istekliliği ve kişilerarası zekâ, (3) yazma istekliliği ve EQ/kişilerarası zekâ arasında negatif bir korelasyon ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca farklı birkaç alt ölçek arasında pozitif korelasyonlar bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Duygusal Zekâ, İletişim Kurma İstekliliği, cinsiyet, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce

Introduction

With the prevailing dominance of the English language all around the world, there is an increasing demand for using English proficiently. The process of learning a language is affected by many factors. These factors can be grouped as external and internal factors. External factors can be exemplified as teachers, classmates, materials, etc. Internal factors are based on learners themselves such as individual factors, motivation, willingness to communicate, intelligence, etc. Both external factors and internal factors must be considered in the process. Both of them can be arranged accordingly. External factors are much easier to reorganize rather than internal factors. However, in order to organize external factors, internal factors, that is learners, must be identified right. In this sense, the willingness to communicate and the emotional intelligence of learners can be considered subcomponents of internal factors (Tabatabaei & Jamshidifar, 2013).

The theoretical background of intelligence has diverse roots. However, Plato can be counted as the first philosopher that described intelligence, and he affiliates intelligence with wax blocks (Ciancialo & Sterberg, 2004). There are many definitions of intelligence. Welcher (1944) states that intelligence is just assessed according to performance but not capacity. Herrstein and Murray (1944) relate intelligence to cognitive ability; however, Binet (1975) state intelligence is changeable and is possibly boosted gradually. Terman (1916) relates intelligence to conceptual reasoning. Spearman (1927) proposes a two-factor theory. The two factors are G for general ability and S for specific ability. G is an inborn ability while S is acquired by peripheral. G and S are seen as complementary to each other. The multi-factor theory is also another theory proposed by Thorndike (1926) and explains intelligence as a compilation of different abilities. Piaget (1963) defines intelligence as a transformation providing a balance between assimilation and accommodation. It has been clarified by Gardner (1983) that individuals who display practical abilities in various fields such as chess, politics, and music possess some abilities to be considered in conceptualizing intelligence in these fields. In the process of developing his theory, he concentrates on the findings in the research field of neuroscience, anthropology, and some psychological analyses to determine the criteria for

each intelligence type. Gardner (1999) postulates the Multiple Intelligence theory, which claims that there are eight interrelated types of intelligence to fashion products: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, naturalistic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence. In addition, he mentioned the possible ninth intelligence: "the existential" (Gardner, 1999).

Despite the fact that Gardner never mentioned the term emotional intelligence, earlier its roots are based on interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. There are different proposed models for EI. Originally, the term emotional intelligence was first proposed by Salovey and Mayer in 1990. The four branch model under the term "ability model" by them suggests four components for emotional intelligence that are emotional perception, emotional integration, emotional understanding, and emotional management (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The Trait Emotional Intelligence Model was proposed by Petrides and Furnham (2000). This model distinguishes between trait and ability. According to Petrides and Furnham (2003, p.40), "Trait EI refers to a constellation of emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions, assessed through self-report". The mixed model of EI comprises two models that are Bar-On Model of EI and Goleman Model of EI. The basis for Bar-On Model is the potential for success and performance rather than success and performance themselves. The model has five subcomponents of emotional intelligence: intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood (Bar-On, 2006). Each subcomponent also has other subcomponents such as self-regard, independence, flexibility, optimism, etc. The second model of the mixed model is the Goleman Model of Emotional Intelligence consisting of mental abilities and personal traits. Goleman (1995, p.43) defines emotional intelligence under five different aspects: knowing one's emotions (self-awareness), managing emotions (self-regulation), motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others (empathy), and handling relationships. Taking all models into consideration, it is obviously realized that emotional intelligence covers the abilities related to oneself and others. It is expected for individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence to be able to comprehend and manage any behaviour of them and others. Goleman (1998) points out that emotional competence is a learned ability. According to Chang (2008), it is possible for one to develop his emotional intelligence with a remarkable effort and it is not something depending on his age. Goleman (1995) underlines that EI is a determinant of academic achievement. Bar-On (1997) and Bracket et al. (2004) state that EI is significant for comprehending the success of undergraduate students. In addition, Panju (2008) substantiates the importance of EI in academic achievement. In addition, the studies carried out to unearth the relationship between EI and academic achievement have proven that they were positively correlated with each other (Eagan & Jaeger, 2007; Zahed-Babelan & Moenika, 2010; Fallahzadeh, 2011; Durgut et al., 2013; Carvalho & Corvin, 2015). However, Meshkat (2011) found that there was no correlation between EI and AA.

Proficiency in a language is achieved by fulfilling some requirements. According to Krashen (1982), second language learning occurs with the help of comprehensible input. A classroom environment that provides interaction in the target language is vital for this input. Within a classroom without interaction between teachers and learners themselves, it is unnecessary to expect production in the target language (Lightbrown & Spada, 1999). Vygotsky (1978) underlines the necessity of interaction in L2 and coins the term Zone of Proximal Development which is established by means of interaction. Interaction is fundamental for authentic communication. The goal of each language class is to foster interaction in L2. Learners' L2 willingness to communicate is a key point for this purpose. The term Willingness to

Communicate (WTC) is originally coming from the term "Unwillingness to Communicate" which was coined by Burgoon (1976) within the field of the first language. As for Willingness to Communicate, McCroskey (1997) was the first researcher to introduce the term to the literature. The term L2 WTC was coined by MacIntyre, et al (1998, p. 547) with a definition of " a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2". They suggested the Heuristic Model including factors affecting the L2 WTC. The model consists of six layers that are grouped as situational and individual variables. While situational variables are considered to change in accordance with a specific context at a specific time, individual variables are considered more stable characteristics of individuals in any context MacIntyre, et al (1998). In the Heuristic (pyramid) Model, situational variables are located at the top since they were considered more effective on L2 WTC rather than individual variables. Examining the model in detail displays the complex structure of willingness to communicate in L2. According to Kim (2004), the L2 WTC of undergraduate students was directly influenced by their self-confidence and motivation. Çetinkaya (2005) reported similar results to Kim (2005). Tuyen and Loan (2019) categorize the factors affecting L2 WTC into psychological and situational factors. Psychological factors are L2 Self-Confidence, Perceived Communicative Competence, L2 Learning Anxiety, Learners' Motivation, and Learners' Personality. As for situational variables, task types, topics, teacher roles, and classroom atmosphere, are included in the group. L2 Self-Confidence is considered the most powerful determinant of L2 WTC as it can cause anxiety or help perceived competence (MacIntyre et al. 1998). Perceived Communicative Competence is the perception of the ability to use L2 to another user of L2. L2 Learning Anxiety is seen as a factor hindering or limiting the use of L2. It can be affected by past or present experiences in the L2 learning process (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991). According to Gardner (1985), motivation is the effort made by learners to learn a language with the help of their willingness. McCroskey and Richmond (1990) state that introverted and extroverted personalities influence the willingness to communicate in both languages. Taking into situational factors affecting L2 WTC, Peng (2012) claims that task nature difficulty level and the time permission are influential for learners. According to MacIntryre et al. (1998), familiarization with topics in the classroom increases learners' confidence and promotes L2 WTC. It is inevitable to accept that teachers have a pivotal role in language learning. MacIntryre et al. (2001) emphasize the significance of teaching styles, classroom procedures, and verbal and nonverbal behaviours that can predict learners' anxiety and confidence. Lastly, the classroom atmosphere is thought of as a factor that can encourage learner participation. Peng (2012) states a warm classroom atmosphere gets learners to have higher levels of L2 WTC.

Goleman (1998) suggests that gender is not a determinant of overall emotional intelligence and adds each gender can distinguish between subcomponents of EI. Aquino (2003) and Brown and Schutte (2006) claims there are no differences between males and females in overall EI. The previous studies are in line with the beforementioned findings (Bracket & Mayer, 2003; Çakan & Altun, 2005; Şakrak, 2009; Meshkat & Nejati, 2017; Ateş, 2019). In contrast, there are also many studies reporting gender as a determinant of EI. In a different context, females were found having higher EI scores than males (Mayer & Geher, 1996; Mayer et al., 1999; Petrides & Furnham, 2000; Costa, et al., 2001; Mandell & Pherwani, 2003; Van Rooy et al., 2005; Domakani et al., 2014; Cabello et al., 2016). Considering the Turkish context, the studies also indicated that females outscored males in overall EI (Dayıoğlu & Türüt-Aşik, 2007; Ergün, 2011). Within the scope of ELT, it is also controversial if gender is a factor predicting L2 WTC.

According to Gardner (1985), attitudes of female language learners are more positive than males. In addition, Worral and Tsarna (1987) and Smith (1997) state similar results to Gardner. Wright (1999) reports that gender is an effective factor in the language learning process. Baker and MacIntyre (2000) also report females as more communicative in L2 than males. However, previously conducted studies assert that gender is not a predictor for WTC in L2 (Valadi et al., 2015; Hişmanoğlu & Özüdoğru, 2017; Ekin, 2018; Uyanık, 2018). In the relevant literature, the studies investigating the relationship between EI, L2 WTC and gender are very rare and only after 2000. Ghalani and Pahlavani (2019) report no gender difference and positively correlated EI and WTC in Iranian EFL setting. A positive correlation between L2 WTC and EI by Tabatabaei and Jamshidifar (2013) and female students had higher scores than males (Alavinia & Alikhani, 2014; Janfeshan & Nazeri, 2014; Gholami, 2015). A positive correlation between the variables is also reported (Ketabdar et al., 2014; Amini & Sabber, 2015; Vahedi & Fatemi, 2015). Rahbar et al. (2016) associated EI with WTC outside the classroom. In this sense, there is a need to investigate the relationship between EFL learners' L2 WTC and EI in terms of their genders. The current study aims at finding this relationship because of the gap in the literature and answer the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between EFL students' EI and genders in prep. schools?
- Is gender a statistically significant factor affecting L2 WTC in prep schools?
- What is the correlation between EFL students' EI and L2 WTC regarding gender in prep. schools?

Methodology

Research Model

This study aimed at discovering if EI and L2 WTC were correlational in terms of the gender of EFL students studying at a foundation university. According to Creswell (2014), estimating scores and the degree of relations among variables are uncovered with the help of correlational designs. Besides, descriptive studies can help to identify features of a phenomenon (Mertler, 2014). For this reason, this study was designed as a descriptive and correlational study and the quantitative research methods were utilized. The participants were asked to fill out two scales and a piece of demographic information. The scales were the Bar-on Emotional Quotient Inventory- EQ-i Adapted Version (Bar-On, 2003) and the L2 WTC Scale (MacIntrye et al, 2001). They were presented in the participants' native language to get more reliable data. SPSS v.22 software was employed to analyse the quantitative data.

Population and Sample

This study was carried out with 120 students studying at an English prep school of a foundation university in Turkey recruited for this study. 50 participants (41.6%) were male, and 70 participants (58.4%) were female. The students were expected to complete an Intensive English Preparatory Programme that involves levels from A1 to B2. Students from all levels except for A1 were included in the study and the simple random sampling procedure was applied which is the most reliable sampling for quantitative studies (Creswell, 2014).

Data Collection Tools

To obtain data for the study, two 5-point Likert scales, from strongly disagree to strongly agree, were used. The first scale was an adapted version of the Bar-On EQ-i (2003) which is filled out self-reportedly. The scale consists of five subscales that are intrapersonal,

interpersonal, adaptability, stress management and general mood. There were 45 items in total: 12 items for intrapersonal, 9 items for interpersonal, 9 items for adaptability, 8 items for stress management, and 7 items for general mood. 18 out of 45 were the items requiring reverse scoring. The other scale was L2 WTC Scale (MacIntrye et al, 2001). This scale measures the L2 WTC inside and outside the classroom and consists of 27 items and evaluates the frequency of time regarding choices of learners.

Analysis of Data

SPSS v.22 software was employed to analyse the obtained data. After transferring the data into the software, reverse scoring was applied for the required items. Then, a normality test was conducted to decide whether the obtained data were distributed parametrically or nonparametrically. The normality test computed skewness and kurtosis values, and the data were counted as normally distributed. Because it is counted as parametric if the values are between -1 and +1 (Hair et al., 2017) and it was so for these data. That is why parametric statistics were utilized. Each individual's total scores were calculated. To answer research questions, Pearson Correlational Analysis and independent-sample t-test were used.

Findings

To find out statistically significant correlations and differences between the Turkish EFL students' EI and L2 WTC in terms of their genders, Pearson Correlation Analysis and independent sample t-tests were conducted.

The Relationship between EI and Gender

Table 1. T-test on Emotional Quotient, Its Scales and Gender

n=120	Gender	Score	S.D.	t	p
Emotional Quotient (Total)	Male	160.39	17.64	-.626	.532
	Female	162.27	15.21		
Intrapersonal	Male	45.20	6.73	-.448	.655
	Female	45.68	5.15		
Interpersonal	Male	33.90	5.05	-2.381	.019
	Female	35.94	4.32		
Adaptability	Male	31.00	4.01	-.706	.482
	Female	31.52	4.00		
Stress Management	Male	24.24	3.59	1.804	.074
	Female	22.94	4.09		
General Mood	Male	26.06	4.88	-.157	.876
	Female	26.19	4.15		

According to table 1, no statistically significant difference was detected between male and female groups in terms of EQ scores (p>0.05). Only Interpersonal Skills were found statistically and significantly different between genders. Female students (M=35.94, SD=4.32) outscored male students (M=33.90, SD=5.05) in terms of their interpersonal skills (p<0.05).

The Relationship between L2 WTC and Gender

Table 2. T-test on L2 Willingness to Communicate, Its Scales and Gender

n=120	Gender	Score	*S.D.*	*t*	*p*
Willingness to Communicate (Total)	Male	71.90	23.59	-2.594	.011
	Female	83.91	26.12		
Speaking	Male	23.18	7.80	-1.275	.205
	Female	25.07	8.23		
Reading	Male	16.22	6.51	-2.974	.004
	Female	19.68	6.16		
Writing	Male	16.84	7.73	-2.522	.013
	Female	20.78	9.35		
Comprehension	Male	15.67	4.82	-3.054	.003
	Female	18.38	4.80		

Table 2 presents the independent sample t-test results for uncovering the differences between female and male EFL students' L2 WTC. When the results were evaluated, there was a statistically significant difference between total L2 WTC scores of male and female groups. Female EFL students (M=83.91, SD=26.12) outperformed male EFL students (M=71.70, SD=23.59) in terms of their total L2 WTC scores ($p<0.05$). In addition, there were statistically significant differences between male and female students in terms of willingness to read, write and comprehend in L2 ($p<0.05$). Female students had higher scores than male students. However, there was no significant difference between the two groups regarding willingness to speak in L2.

The Correlation between EI and L2 WTC in terms of Gender

Table 3 reports that for male EFL students, there were positive correlations between the followings ($p<0.05$):
- willingness to speak and their levels of willingness to read, to write, to comprehend,
- willingness to read and their levels of willingness to write and comprehend,
- willingness to write and their levels of willingness to comprehend,
- intrapersonal and their levels of interpersonal, adaptability and general mood emotional intelligence,
- interpersonal and their levels of adaptability and general mood emotional intelligence,
- adaptability and their levels of stress management and general mood emotional intelligence,
- stress management and their levels of general mood emotional intelligence

Table 3 also presents that there were negative correlations between the followings ($p<0.05$):
- willingness to communicate (total) and their levels of intrapersonal emotional intelligence,
- willingness to read and their levels of intrapersonal emotional intelligence,
- willingness to write and EQ (total) and their levels of intrapersonal emotional intelligence

Table 3. Correlation between Emotional Quotient, Willingness to Communicate and Their Subscales (Males)

n=51	WTC total	Speak	Read	Write	Compr.	EQ Total	Intra Pers.	Inter Pers.	Adapt.	Stress Man.

		WTC total	Speak	Read	Write	Compr.	EQ Total	Intra Pers.	Inter Pers.	Adapt.	Stress Man.
Speak	r	.879*									
	p	.0005									
Read	r	.935*	.793**								
	p	.0005	.0005								
Write	r	.879*	.636**	.771**							
	p	.0005	.0005	.0005							
Compr.	r	.799*	.592**	.704	.625**						
	p	.0005	.0005	.0005	.0005						
EQ total	r	-.198	-.027	-.255	-.294*	-.108					
	p	.164	.853	.071	.036	.449					
Intra Pers.	r	-.317	-.158	-.358*	-.437*	-.136	.801**				
	p	.024	.267	.015	.001	.340	.0005				
Inter Pers.	r	-.137	-.042	-.147	-.252	-.001	.739**	.482**			
	p	.337	.771	.304	.074	.992	.0005	.0005			
Adapt.	r	-.095	.066	-.181	-.125	-.125	.713'**	.411**	.405**		
	p	.508	.646	.203	.381	.380	.0005	.003	.003		
Stress Man.	r	-.007	.053	-.075	.010	-.035	.491**	.117	.190	.482**	
	p	.961	.713	.601	.944	.809	.0005	.415	.181	.0005	
General Mood	r	-.054	.073	-.101	-.106	-.074	.800**	.596**	.501**	.419**	.286*
	p	.709	.612	.483	.458	.606	.0005	.0005	.0005	.002	.042

According to table 4, There was no negative correlation found between female EFL students' levels of WTC and EQ or their subscales. However, there was a significant positive correlation between the scales that female EFL students filled out ($p<0.05$):

- WTC (total) and their levels of all WTC subscales and level of general mood emotional intelligence,
- willingness to speak and their levels of willingness to read, to write and to comprehend and level of adaptability emotional intelligence,
- willingness to read and their levels of willingness to write and comprehend,
- willingness to write and their levels of willingness to comprehend and general mood emotional intelligence,
- willingness to comprehend and their level of general mood emotional intelligence,
- "EQ (total) and each sub-scale

Table 4. Correlation between Emotional Quotient, Willingness to Communicate and Their Subscales (Females)

n=69		WTC total	Speak	Read	Write	Compr.	EQ Total	Intra Pers.	Inter Pers.	Ada-pt.	Stress Man.
Speak	r	.916*									
	p	.0005									
Read	r	.915*	.783*								
	p	.0005	.0005								
Write	r	.930*	.766*	.806*							
	p	*.0005*	*.0005*	*.0005*							
Compr.	r	.885*	.773*	.783*	.762*						
	p	.0005	.0005	.0005	.0005						
EQ total	r	.180	.207	.149	.150	.139					
	p	.139	.087	.220	.219	.254					

Intra	r	.128	.114	.108	.123	.125	.781*				
Pers.	p	.293	.350	.377	.315	.308	.0005				
Inter	r	.096	.163	.066	.057	.045	.589*	.352*			
Pers.	p	.434	.180	.589	.643	.713	.0005	.003			
Adapt.	r	.215	.255*	.167	.172	.180	.798*	.481**	.386*		
	p	.077	.034	.171	.157	.138	.0005	.0005	.001		
Stress	r	-.053	.025	-.017	-.095	-.128	.539*	.168	.071	.412*	
Man.	p	.662	.838	.889	.439	.295	.0005	.169	.564	.0005	
General	r	.246*	.178	.201	.264*	.261*	.782*	.624**	.238*	.554*	.312*
Mood	p	.042	.144	.098	.028	.031	.0005	.0005	.048	.0005	.009

Discussion, Conclusion, Recommendation and Limitations

This study was meant to dissolve the link between the Turkish EFL students' willingness to communicate and EI in terms of gender. Firstly, the findings indicated that gender was not a determinant of EFL students' overall levels of emotional intelligence. However, considering subscales of emotional intelligence, female students scored better only in terms of interpersonal skills. The rest of the subscales of EI were not found as affected by gender. Prior studies point out that the effect of gender on these variables is controversial. The results of this study will now be compared to the findings of previous work. The results are in partly line with the findings of the studies in different contexts that did not find there was a statistically significant difference between females and males concerning overall EI (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1998; Aquino, 2003; Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Brown & Schutte, 2006). In addition, they are partly in line with one study that found even though it was not statistically significant, females outscored males for self-awareness, interpersonal skills, and self-esteem (Meshkat & Nejati, 2017). In the Turkish context, the results are also controversial. In the studies conducted in different contexts with different participants, gender was not found as a determinant of overall EI (Çakan & Altun, 2005; Şakrak, 2009; Ateş, 2019). In contrast, the study conducted by Sutarso et al. (1996) contradicted the results of this study and reported that there is a differentiation between the genders, and females outperformed in overall emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and compassion. However, the findings of the current study are not supported by the previous studies which clearly stated that gender influenced overall EI and female groups performed better (Petrides & Furnham, 2000; Costa et al., 2001; Van Rooy et al., 2005; Domakani et al., 2014; Cabello et al., 2016). In the educational context, females scored significantly better than males in overall EI according to the findings of several studies (Dayıoğlu & Türüt-Aşik, 2007; Ergün, 2011). In opposition to these findings, one study indicated that male students scored higher than female students in overall EI in the Iranian context (Zohrevand; 2010).

Secondly, according to the findings of the study, gender was found as a factor predicting overall L2 WTC and its subscales except for willingness to speak. The results indicated that the Turkish female EFL students were statistically and significantly more willing to speak in the target language than the Turkish male EFL learners. In the relevant literature, there are similarities and differences between the findings. Many studies showed that female students tended to communicate in L2 more than male students, which is in line with the findings of the current study (Gardner, 1985; Worral & Tsarna, 1987; Smith, 1997; Wright, 1999; Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Alavinia & Alikhani, 2014). However, there are also findings of studies reporting that gender was not a determination of L2 WTC, and these findings contradict the

findings of the current studies (Valadi et al., 2015; Hişmanoğlu & Özüdoğru, 2017; Ekin, 2018; Uyanık, 2018).

Lastly, the correlation between the Turkish EFL students' EI and L2 WTC concerning gender was questioned. Both L2 WTC and EI were positively correlated with their subscales for each gender. However, these intercorrelations showed differences depending on gender. In addition, the results of male groups indicated that there were negative correlations between subscales of EI and L2 WTC, and it is important to note that not all subscales of the two variables were correlated with each other at all. There were also insignificant correlations (p>0.05). Previous studies have demonstrated that there was a positive relationship between L2 WTC and EI (Tabatabaei & Jamshidifar, 2013; Alavinia & Alikhani, 2014; Janfeshan & Nazeri, 2014; Ketabdar et al., 2014; Amini & Sabber, 2015; Gholami, 2015; Vahedi & Fatemi, 2015; Rahbar et al, 2016).

The findings are significant regarding pedagogical implications in an EFL setting. The combination of the findings provides some support for considering L2 WTC and EI of learners in EFL classrooms. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998) language has a significant role in fostering students' willingness to communicate. Accordingly, learners' differences based on their EI have also a crucial role in language learning. Since there might be variations in the levels of learners' L2 WTC and EI, teaching practices must be planned appropriately for each learner's differences. For this reason, teachers and other stakeholders must be aware of the importance of factors affecting teaching practice. In this sense, before starting the teacher process, it will be the first step to identify learner profiles to design effective lesson plans. To illustrate, for the learners with higher levels of interpersonal skills or higher levels of willingness to speak, group work, and pair work are going to work well and increase interaction among learners. In a crowded classroom, where it is hard for teachers to deal with each student one by one, providing groups with some communicative tasks will help both teachers with time management and students to interact communicatively. Identifying learner profiles will aid teachers to be aware of students' learning strategies and it will affect teaching strategies that cover the decisions of using appropriate contexts, scaffolding strategies, materials, extra-curricular activities, etc. For students who have lower levels of stress management skills, a less stressful classroom environment must be designed, and students ensure that it is okay to make mistakes during the process, which will encourage them to be risk-takers.

Considering the Turkish EFL context, prep school students are required to master the English language to continue in their department. However, it is observed that most of them are unwilling to participate in classroom activities, especially the ones with lower levels of language proficiency. To manage this situation, the importance of rapport and positive feedback rises to lower their affective filters. Creating real-life context engaging students in the learning raises their interest and motivates them to participate in their learning. It is important to note that communicating in a language does not mean being able to only speak in that language. It requires to be able to write, listen in that language and be able to comprehend what you hear. In this sense, classroom activities must aim to develop all aspects of the target language. According to Chang (2008), EI can be developed and making students aware of it will help develop their emotional intelligence. Panju (2008) suggests that there are

many activities and strategies to foster EI skills including real-life tasks, stories, and role-playing activities that allow them to express their emotions and comprehend others' emotions.

Although this study was applied in the context of English preparatory classes, it is an undeniable fact that emotional intelligence is important for every individual regardless of the context and age. Moreover, it is consistent with many findings that the willingness to communicate in English in each context in which English is taught as a foreign language in Turkey varies due to various reasons. From this point of view, the possibility of emotional intelligence playing an active role in the L2 WTC of young, young adult or adult learner groups cannot be excluded in various contexts such as primary education, secondary schools or English Language Courses. Precisely for this reason, it is important to evaluate the results of this study as it can be a source or starting point for obtaining educational implications not only for the English Preparatory student groups but also for the other aforementioned learner groups. In addition to the result of the study, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning can be used as a guide. CASEL is an entrusted association for teachers and policymakers to enhance social and emotional learning in schools and instructs EI Teacher workshops to enable educators to raise their awareness of the importance of emotions and be able to apprehend and manage them in the learning and teaching process.

The current study has some limitations. Firstly, it was conducted at one foundation university with 120 prep students, and this limited the profiles of learners. Secondly, only quantitative methods were utilized. Although it helped generalize, it hindered reaching specific details of participants in L2 WTC and EI. In addition, because the scales were filled-out self-reportedly, participants might have felt hiding the real answers for any items. Within this context, it is suggested that the association of L2 WTC and EI should be investigated in different contexts and make use of mixed methods to obtain data. Interviews and observations after collecting quantitative data ensure the self-reported scales/questionnaire results. Lastly, it is strongly recommended that the causal relationship between variables must be focused on.

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