

The Impact of Task-based Instruction on the Enhancement of Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' Speaking Skill and Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract: This study tried to investigate the impact of task-based instruction (TBI) on the enhancement of Iranian EFL learners' speaking skill. The study also tried to scrutinize the impact of TBI on learners' emotional intelligence. To meet these ends, 60 students were randomly divided into two groups, the experimental group and the control group. At the very first session of the term, two speaking examinations were conducted for both experimental and control group. After the speaking examinations, the participants were asked to answer Bar-On's emotional intelligence questionnaire. The experimental group was instructed through task-based approach and the control group received instruction through present-practice-produce (PPP) approach. The scores obtained by two raters from the interview post-tests were analyzed through non-parametric tests, and the data obtained from EQ questionnaires were analyzed through t-tests. Results of the statistical analysis revealed that the experimental group performed significantly better on the speaking post-test than the control group. Furthermore, the findings also indicated that the learners in the experimental group became more emotionally intelligent than those in the control group.

Keywords: Speaking Skill, Task-Based Instruction, Emotional Intelligence, Communicative Approaches.

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Introduction

Whether for business, education or pleasure, a primary motivation to learn English as a second or foreign language is to be able to converse with speakers of this language. However, in addition to being an important skill, speaking is also a great challenge for foreign language learners. According to Thornbury (2005) speaking is not just the ability to form grammatically correct sentences. He stated “speaking is interactive and requires the ability to cooperate in the management of speaking turns” (Thornbury, 2005, p. iv). Among many factors that lead to speaking failure, lack of automaticity is of great importance. Foreign language learners’ lack of second language (L2) knowledge and the difficulty to retrieve the new knowledge to the existing one prevents the automaticity. Learners are mainly exposed to the written language, reading text-book exercises, and instruction-focused teacher talks. According to Willis (1996), little exposure to real spoken interaction causes speaking failure. Furthermore, instruction in English classes is basically based on form rather than meaning and this process results in speaking assessments only occasionally. Finally and perhaps most importantly, lack of motivation is an undeniable factor that prevents speaking proficiency.

Many areas of education are undergoing changes in the way teaching and learning is perceived. Teacher-centered lecturing and structural-syllabus instructions are giving way to a more student-centered, hands-on, practical, and flexible approaches (Schank & Cleary, 1995). One of the areas which came under this paradigm shift is the traditional ‘Present-Practice-Produce’ approach of teaching English. It has been replaced by ‘Communicative Language Teaching’, an offshoot of which is ‘Task-Based Teaching’. As Brown (2007) mentioned, “Among recent manifestation of CLT, task-based language teaching has emerged as a major focal point of language teaching practice worldwide” (p. 242). The difference between CLT and TBI is a matter of their focus. In TBI, the focus is on task-completion rather than on a particular function, form, or “on the language used in the process” (Long & Crooks, 1993, as cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 31).

Task-based language teaching is a vibrant area of second language acquisition research and is an approach to language teaching based on the ideas that language learners can learn the language better by interacting with others while performing tasks and by focusing on the message rather than on the form of the language (Ellis, 2017; Long, 1983; Nunan, 2006). The reason why this method seems to be significant can be explained from many aspects: First, it provides learners with real life tasks (authentic tasks which have meaning and value beyond

the classroom) within classroom context so natural learning can be provided. Being a learner-centered approach, TBI views language as a communicative tool by engaging learners in the natural, practical and functional use of language for a meaningful purpose (Lin, 2009). On the broader level, studies like the present one can acknowledge curriculum developers and syllabus designers to shift their focus from language syllabi to “life syllabi” (Pishghadam, 2011) and consider life issues in the English language teaching (ELT) classes. Second, it stresses meaning over form; therefore learners are free to use whatever language they already have for task completion. The goal of TBI is to activate learners as much as possible during language learning and teaching process (Willis, 1996). Additionally, the range of tasks available (reading texts, listening texts, problem-solving, role-plays, questionnaires, etc.) offers a great deal of flexibility in this model and should lead to more motivating activities for the learners (Edwards & Willis, 2005). Last but not least, task-based approach no longer divides activities into the four language skills. Instead, the new approaches such as TBI call for communicative activities that integrate the four domains (Ellis, 2017).

The following research questions motivated this study:

1. Does task-based approach (TBA) enhance speaking ability of EFL learners more than traditional approach (PPP)?
2. Is there a significant difference between the mean of experimental (TBA) and control (PPP) groups regarding their emotional intelligence (EQ) score?
3. Does the application of TBA have an impact on the constructs of emotional intelligence (EQ)?

Background

What is TBLT

Task-based approach aims at presenting opportunities for learners to master language both in speaking and writing via learning activities designed to engage learners in the natural, practical and functional use of language for meaningful purpose (Lin, 2009). Based on Willis (2004), TBI rests on three main premises. First, language learning is not a linear process, but it is a complex organic and dynamic process which changes systematically. Second, language learning is best achieved when the learners' focus is on the meaning rather than the form. Accordingly, language learners need a lot of comprehensible input through the exposure to a language in order to get the meaning without focal attention to formal features of language. Third, real-world and authentic situations should be provided for the learners in order to use

the language purposefully that leads to acquiring that language in a natural way. In order to maximize speaking opportunities and autonomous language use among learners, speaking tasks should have different characteristics such as productivity, purposefulness, interactivity, challenge, safety, authenticity(relation to real-life language use) (Thornbury, 2005). Willis (1996) has given the following classification of tasks. She mentioned six types of tasks:

1. Listing: The simplest type of task is listing, but the linguistic challenge can vary according to and result in a list of words or short phrases or complex sentences. For example learners could be asked to list reasons for using particular forms of transport. Tasks involving listing includes, Brainstorming: It has been found that brainstorming is an effective way involving learners especially shy ones in topics and promotes interaction (Cullen, 1998, as cited in Willis & Willis, 2007); Fact-finding: It involves” asking learners to search for specific facts in books or leaflets or on a website, or to ask other people outside class (Willis & Willis, 2007, p. 67), and Games based on listing: quizzes, memory challenge, and guessing games.

2. Ordering and Sorting: This broad category involves a variety of cognitive processes which require more thought and effort. For example learners are asked to look at the four pictures which are mixed up. Learners should work in pairs and put the four pictures in a sequence so that they tell a story. Tasks involving ordering and sorting are Sequencing, Rank ordering, Classifying, and Games based on classified sets.

3. Comparing: These tasks involve comparing information in order to find similarities and/or differences.

4. Problem Solving: Text-books often contain activities based on common problems – pollution, relationships, noisy neighbors, and so on. But sometimes problem-solving tasks are over too quickly that learners agree on the first solution that comes to mind, using minimal language. (See Appendix A)

5. Sharing Personal Experiences: Activities where learners are asked to recount their personal experiences and tell stories are valuable because they give learners a chance to speak for longer and in a more sustained way. And it is something we often do in real-life.

6. Creative Tasks: Creative tasks are often called projects and involve pairs or groups of learners in creative work. They are sometimes a combination of other task types and need out- of- class research. Researchers have debated how tasks should be used in instruction. (See Appendix B)

A number of different versions of TBI have been proposed, ranging from a strong version (*task-based teaching*) by Willis (1996) to a weaker version (*task-supported teaching*) by Ellis (2017). Willis's framework falls into three main parts: pre-task, the task cycle, and language focus. Pre-task: This phase is the shortest in the framework and consists of introducing the topic and related words and phrases with the class. Task Cycle: This phase is divided into three stages, (1) the task performed in pairs or small groups; (2) the planning stage, in which learners plan how to report to the class what they did in the task; (3) "the task reporting stage, either via presentations or formal write-ups" (Roux, 2012). Language Focus: It is the final phase in which students receive feedback and have the opportunity to examine their use of language.

What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence (EI) was described formally by Salovey and Mayer (1990). They defined it 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' (p. 189).

In 1997, Goleman made it popular by writing his book *Emotional Intelligence* (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2001). According to Goleman (2001), emotional intelligence refers to "the abilities to recognize and regulate emotions in ourselves and in others" (p.14). He proposed his model of emotional intelligence which consists of four major EI domains: Self-Awareness (being aware of your feelings), Self-Management (managing your feelings), Social-Awareness (reading people and groups accurately), and relationship-management (causing desirable responses in others).

Bar-On (1997b, p. 14) characterized emotional intelligence as "an array of noncognitive capabilities, competences, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures". Bar-On regards EI as a mixed intelligence, consisting of cognitive ability and personality aspects. This model emphasizes how cognitive and personality factors influence general well-being, and is process-oriented. Bar-On states that EI develops over time and can be improved through training, programming, and therapy (Bar-On, 2006). In Bar-On's model there are five broad areas relevant to success and these components, each with its own subcomponents.

Table 2.1. Bar-On's Model of EI

EI Components	Subcomponents
Intrapersonal	<i>Self-Regard</i>
	<i>Emotional</i>
	<i>Self-Regard</i>
	<i>Self-Awareness</i>
	<i>Assertiveness</i>
	<i>Independence</i>
Interpersonal	<i>Self-Actualization</i>
	<i>Empathy</i>
	<i>Social</i>
	<i>Responsibility</i>
Stress Management	<i>Interpersonal</i>
	<i>Relationship</i>
Adaptability	<i>Stress Tolerance</i>
	<i>Impulse Control</i>
	<i>Reality-Testing</i>
General Mood	<i>Flexibility</i>
	<i>Problem-Solving</i>
	<i>Optimism</i>
	<i>Happiness</i>

The model's measurement mechanism of EI is a 130-item self-report inventory known as the Bar-On's Emotion Quotient Inventory (EQ-I), which is developed for individuals of 16 years of age or older.

Thorndike (1921) defined intelligence as "the power of good responses from the point of view of truth or fact" (cited in Mayer & Salovey, 2004, p.60).

Sternberg and Detterman (1986) described EI as "the capacity to learn accurately and to reason abstractly so as to adapt to one's environment" (cited in Sahebjam, 2010, p.24).

Consequently, the key to EI is an understanding of one's own and others' emotions, and acting in the most appropriate way based on that understanding (Goleman, 2001; Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

The Impact of TBLT on Learners' Speaking Ability

Task-based approach has emerged as a significant component in the development of the language curriculum. Ahangari and Abdi (2011) examined the effect of pre-task planning (strategic planning) on the complexity and accuracy of task-based oral performance with the decision-making task type. The findings revealed that pre-task planning had a positive effect on complexity whereas no positive effect was evident in the accuracy of learners' oral performance. Geng and Ferguson (2013) investigated the influence of task type and

participatory structure (or classroom organization) in pre-task planning on the fluency, complexity and accuracy of learners' oral production. Results showed that planning led to significantly superior performance than no planning across all dependent variables. Pair-work planning significantly advantaged fluency compared to teacher-led planning but not accuracy or complexity. Consistent with previous research, teacher-led planning had some benefits for accuracy, and individual planning for complexity, but neither of these effects reached significance. The decision-making task, meanwhile, led to greater complexity than the information-exchange task. In order to examine the effect of task complexity and sequence on speaking, Madarsara and Rahimy (2014) analyzed the performance data collected from 60 intermediate Iranian EFL learners on two tasks (a map task and a car task). The findings of the study also revealed that the participants in the experimental group, who practiced task sequence and complexity, far outweighed the control group in complexity and fluency than the other area of the speaking test.

Research Studies on EI in the Domain of Language Learning and Teaching

Pishghadam (2009) determined the impact of emotional and verbal intelligences on English language learning success in Iran. He concluded that EI influences the product of learning several skills especially productive ones. The result also indicated that EI and verbal intelligence (VI) affected turn taking, amount of communication, amount of errors, and writing ability. In their study, Soodmand Afshar and Rahimi (2014) investigated the relationship among critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and speaking abilities of Iranian EFL learners. The results of the multiple correlation analyses revealed a) emotional intelligence, followed by critical thinking, correlated significantly highly with speaking abilities, b) all components of EI correlated significantly highly with speaking abilities, c) there was a significant positive relationship between critical thinking and emotional intelligence. The results of multiple regression analyses revealed that emotional intelligence was a stronger predictor of speaking abilities with critical thinking standing at the second place. Costa and Faria (2015) investigated the impact of emotional intelligence on academic achievement. Results showed that although both types of EI can predict students' academic achievement, they exert a higher influence in the prediction of 10th grade students' achievement. Moreover, the performance measure exhibited higher predictive power over the self-report one. Multi-group analyses indicated that some paths in the grade point average (GPA) model differed by gender while those in the Mathematics model differed by type of

school. These findings suggested the importance of fostering students' EI in the academic context as a strategy for enhancing academic success. According to these findings teachers and syllabus designers should shift their focus from the present training programs to programs that enhance the level of learners' emotional intelligence.

Method

Participants

The total population participating in this study included 60 Iranian female intermediate EFL learners with the age range of 16 to 21 years old. The language learners had experienced at least two years of English learning and were going to study 'Touchstone series, Book 2' (McCarthy, McCarten, & Sandiford, 2014). Of the total number of 96 EFL learners who enrolled for Touchstone (Book 2), 60 of them whose scores from the previous term (Book1) and an interview fell above 80% of the total scores could register in the new semester. As this study used a quasi-experimental, intact group design, the researcher divided these learners into two groups. Each group with 30 students had the researcher as the instructor. Learners attended their English class three sessions in a week. Each session lasted one hour and a half, the whole semester was 22 sessions which lasted about two months.

Instrumentation

This section is classified into materials and instruments used in the study. The students' course-book was used as the instructional material for both groups. Furthermore, the experimental group was exposed to some specific tasks. The other instruments contained Bar-On emotional quotient inventory and an interview test for measuring students' speaking proficiency.

Materials

The participants studied 'Touchstone, Student's Book 2'. This book contains 12 units. The learners studied only four units of the book. Moreover, the experimental group was provided with some types of tasks, educational video clips and power point presentations related to the lessons of the book. In addition, the researcher tried to integrate task-based framework into the different parts of the text-book (such as exercises) and incorporate language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing). The types of tasks used for experimental group are illustrated in the following Table.

Table 3.1. Some Tasks Integrated in the Textbook for Experimental Group

Task No.	Task Types	Topics
1	Problem-solving	Health problems: Think of solutions to these problems?
2	Information –gap	People's appearances: Find the differences between two pictures and guess where did they go?
3	Sharing personal experiences (story telling, discussions, & divergent tasks)	Happy endings: Tell anecdotes about good experiences that happened to you.
4	Role-plays	Communication: Practicing phone conversations.

Instruments

Two instruments were carried out in this study: Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I) and an oral interview test.

Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I)

In order to measure learners' EQ, Bar-On's emotional quotient inventory (1997) was used, the short form of which was lately published as a 90 item questionnaire (See Appendix C). Scores of Bar-On-EQ-I range from minimum 270 to maximum 450. The maximum score in each scale is 30 and the minimum is 6. Samouee (2002) validated this inventory in Iran (as cited in Sahebjam, 2010). The items of this inventory were all translated into Persian, revised based on Iranian culture and were again translated to English to compare both forms. Again some revision was done by some experts.

An Interview Test

In order to measure students' speaking proficiency, an interview test was used. The students were marked according to an assessment criterion from Conversational English Proficiency Rating (as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002, p. 222). According to foreign institute (FSI), there are five factors for checking learners' conversation service performance. These factors include: accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Data Collection

Since this study used a quasi-experimental, intact group design, the participants' speaking proficiency and emotional intelligence had to be checked for homogeneity prior to the treatment. In order to have two homogeneous groups, at the very first session of the term two speaking examinations (interview tests), one for the experimental group and one for the

control group were conducted related to oral tasks which were going to be practiced during the term. The interview tests were administered by two raters one of whom was the researcher. After speaking examinations, participants were asked to answer Bar-On's emotional intelligence questionnaire. The experimental group was taught through task-based instruction. Considering the nature of the conversational topics in the students' course-book, appropriate information-gap tasks, problem-solving tasks, discussions (telling stories, discussions, and divergent tasks), and role-plays were planned by the researcher and practiced by the students in the classroom during the course of the study. Furthermore, some tasks based on students' course-book integrating speaking with other skills (Listening, Reading, and Writing) were also conducted.

In contrast, the subjects in the control group were taught the same text-book (each session two pages of the book) but in a traditional way, that is, the presentation of the topics by the teacher, students practicing new items through repetitions, drills, exercises and the dialogue practice. At the production stage, learners performed activities such as role plays or discussions without performing a task. After the treatment, the post-tests were administered to examine the effect of TBI and PPP on learners' speaking proficiency and their EI.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were conducted on the data gathered from EQ Questionnaire and interview tests to compare the performance of the two groups at the pre-test and post-test stages. The learners' scores were analyzed through non-parametric tests. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test was conducted for measuring participants speaking progress after treatment and Mann-Whitney U test was carried out to compare both groups in terms of speaking proficiency. In order to measure the EQ scores of both experimental and control group, independent-samples t-tests were performed. Furthermore, two-tailed matched t-tests were run on the experimental and control group to compare their performances in the pre-test and post-test stages and to find the effect of TBI on the EI of the experimental group. The sub-scales of the EQ were analyzed through t-test too.

Results

In order to answer the first question, non-parametric tests were used to compare both groups' scores after the treatment.

Table 4.1. Mann-Whitney U Test for Comparing both Groups' Scores after the Treatment

Experimental & Control	Post-test
Mann-WhitneyU	275.000
WilcoxonW	740.000
Z	-2.589
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.010

As Table 4.1. indicates, there is a statistically significant difference between the control and experimental groups with regard to post-test scores (Mann-Whitney $U = 275.00$, $p < .05$). So it can be said that task-based approach (TBA) enhanced speaking ability of EFL learners more than traditional approach (PPP).

In order to measure the impact of methods on learners' EQ, paired-samples t-tests were used.

Table 4.2. Paired-samples T-tests for Comparing both Groups' EQ before and after the Treatment

Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	
Control Group	Pre EQ	-5.933	46.219	-.703	29	.488
	Post EQ					
Experimental	Pre EQ	-13.533	42.538	-1.993	29	.042
	Post EQt					

As Tables 4.2. shows, the difference between the mean scores of the control group before and after treatment is not statistically significant ($t = .703$, $df = 29$, $p > .05$). However, the difference between the mean scores of the experimental group before and after treatment is statistically significant ($t = 1.993$, $df = 29$, $p < .05$). Consequently, it can be concluded that TBA improved learners' EQ.

A Paired-samples t-test was used to compare the experimental group with itself from pre-test to post-test regarding the scores of EQ subscales.

Table 4.3. Paired-samples T-tests Comparing Scores of EQ subscales before and after the Treatment in Experimental Group

	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig. (tailed)	
Intrapersonal	1&2	-3.9	20.68708	-1.033	29	.310
Interpersonal	1&2	-4.16667	8.17517	-2.792	29	.009
Adaptability	1&2	-.70000	5.84365	-.656	29	.517
Stress management	1&2	-5.30000	9.14311	-3.175	29	.004
General mood	1&2	-2.50000	7.61464	-1.798	29	.083

As Table 4.3 shows, the difference between the means of pre-test and post-test of interpersonal is statistically significant ($t= 2.792$, $df= 29$, $p<.05$). Furthermore, the difference between the means of pre-test and post-test of stress-management is statistically significant ($t= 3.175$, $df= 29$, $p<.05$). Consequently, it can be concluded that only these two subscales have been improved through task-based language teaching.

Discussion

The results of this study showed that Iranian EFL learners who were instructed by task-based approach performed better in their speaking ability than those instructed by PPP approach. This finding can be interpreted in the light of characteristics of TBLT and its difference with PPP approach. First, TBI is a meaning-focused approach that reflects the real world language use for purposeful communication. Being a learner-centered approach, TBI views language as a communicative tool by engaging learners in the natural, practical and functional use of language for a meaningful purpose (Lin, 2009). Second, in TBLT there is a very helpful pre-task phase in which the teacher explores the topic with the class, highlights useful words and phrases and helps learners prepare for the task. Third, learners engaged in TBLT are viewed as active team players who are willing to take risks and be innovative (Nunan, 2005; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Fourth, task-based approach no longer divides activities into the four language skills. Instead, the new approaches such as TBI call for communicative activities that integrate the four domains (Ellis, 2017). Last but not least, learners in TBI mainly perform tasks in pairs or small groups in which they are involved in the negotiation of meaning and this seems to help learners' participation, talking time and oral fluency (as cited in Mao, 2012).

The findings also suggest that learners who had been instructed by task-based approach became more emotionally intelligent than those instructed by PPP approach. The aforementioned result might be attributed to a number of factors. One of the main characteristics of TBA is the shift in language classroom organization from teacher-fronted to the student group work which has received a growing amount of theoretical and empirical support (Long, 1983; Long, Adams, McLean, & Castanos, 1976; Taylor, 1982). It seems that discussions and other tasks which are often used in group work promote students' participation, autonomy, and achievement. It can be inferred that the tasks used in the experimental class might have a significant role on the enhancement of interpersonal and stress management abilities of learners. For instance, in discussion groups in which the

learners were asked to perform a task, brought this chance for learners to express their feelings freely and share it with others in an explicit way. Besides, group works could help the learners get to know themselves more deeply, foster good relations with others, and reduce stress and anxiety dramatically (Pishghadam, 2009). Brown (2001, p. 178) affirms essential advantages of group discussion in EFL teaching: (1) students are able to generate interactive language; (2) students are embraced by an effective climate; (3) students are able to promote learner responsibility and autonomy; and (4) students are able to understand toward individualizing instruction. Furthermore, the stronger and friendlier relationship between team members has been proved (Byrne, 1981). Another explanation for this finding may rely on the role of teachers in TBLT. Richards and Rodgers (2001) and Scarcella and Oxford (1992) mentioned the following task roles for teachers: selector of tasks, preparer of learners for tasks, pre-task consciousness raiser about form, guide, nurturer, strategy-instructor, and provider of assistance. Willis and Willis (2007) mentioned different roles for teachers in a TBA class that one of these roles is to be a 'motivator'. The report stage in TBLT framework may have a significant role on learners' emotional intelligence. In report stage, some groups present their reports to the class or exchange and compare written reports. The rest of the class listens or reads with a purpose (e.g. in order to fill in a questionnaire or to start a survey of some sort). The teacher chairs the session, commenting on reports and encouraging students. The idea is that learners gain practice in public, 'prestige' language use and that all learners are further exposed to spoken or written language.

Other findings revealed by this research were that the application of TBA had no impact on participants' Intrapersonal, Adaptability, and General mood scores while TBA enhanced learners' Interpersonal and Stress-management scores. Consequently, the first, the fourth, and the fifth hypotheses of this research were confirmed, but the second and the third hypotheses were rejected.

In order to provide a sound explanation for these findings, we may resort to the nature of EQ subscales. Moreover, a closer look should be taken at the tasks used in this study.

One of the main objectives for any person is to maintain the best possible relations with the people around him or her. As it was mentioned in the literature review, Interpersonal component in Bar-On's EQ-I has three sub-components: Empathy, Social Responsibility, and Interpersonal Relationship. Moreover, Stress-management has two sub-components: Stress Tolerance and Impulse Control. Accordingly, it can be inferred that the tasks used in the experimental class might have a significant role on the enhancement of interpersonal and

stress management abilities of learners. For instance, in discussion groups in which the learners were asked to perform a task, brought this chance for learners to express their feelings freely and share it with others in an explicit way. Besides, group works could help the learners get to know themselves more deeply, foster good relations with others, and reduce stress and anxiety dramatically (Pishghadam, 2009). Brown (2001, p. 178) affirms essential advantages of group discussion in EFL teaching: (1) students are able to generate interactive language; (2) students are embraced by an effective climate; (3) students are able to promote learner responsibility and autonomy; and (4) students are able to understand toward individualizing instruction.

Our findings also manifested that there was no significant difference between any of intrapersonal, adaptability, and general mood scores before and after task-based instruction. This may be related to the nature of the tasks, external factors such as family or society.

In all, findings of the study are also consistent with Bar-on (2006) who believes that having done an effective effort to take care of the students' emotional and social needs can result in the improvement of their academic performance. Moreover, as Mayer and Geher (1996) asserted, it may be possible to educate those who are low in emotional competencies to improve their abilities to better recognize their feelings, express them, and regulate them.

Suggestions for Further Research

Every scientific enquiry opens new directions for further research. Some of the parameters by which future investigations in this domain may be continued are, first, in the present study, age and gender of participants were not taken into account. Moreover, only EFL learners at the intermediate level participated in the study and beginners and advanced learners were not considered. Consequently, further studies are needed to take the effect of these variables into account. Second, the researcher of this study only investigated the effect of TBLT on speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners. It is engrossing to conduct a study investigating the effect of TBLT on other language skills and sub-skills. Future directions for research in this area would be to survey the role of task-based approach in language testing. Last but not least, the subject of future investigation can focus on the impact of different task types on learners' language proficiency and emotional intelligence.

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Appendix A

Sample Problem-Solving Task

Organize the class into pairs. One student (or two students) is the interviewer. Each interviewer receives a card, and interviews the other as directed. They then change roles.

CARD 1: TELEVISION

You are the interviewer. Ask the underlined question. Ask extra questions as necessary. Use the questions below or think of your own.

- How important to our lives is television?
- Can television change the way people think?
- Why is television so popular?
- Do people watch too much television?
- How would life be different without television?
- Are documentaries more important than entertainment programs?
- How could television in your country be improved?

CARD 2: EDUCATION

You are the interviewer. Ask the underlined question. Ask extra questions as necessary. Use the questions below or think of your own.

- What is the purpose of education?
- Are subjects like science and economics more important than subjects like art and music?
- Do you think schools should teach fewer subjects, but teach them in more detail?
- How much difference can teachers make to their pupils lives?
- Why do some young people hate school?
- Is education for very young children really necessary?

Retrieved from ELT <http://www.games.com> / Jon Marks. This activity first appeared in *English teaching Professional* magazine.

Appendix B

Sample Creative Task

Group Activity

In groups discuss these questions:

1. What kind of movies do you like the best?
2. Who is your favorite actor? Actress?
3. What movies have you seen recently?
4. How often do you watch movies or videos?
5. What movies do you want to see?

By Yourself

Make three riddles for movies that you have seen:

Movie1: It's a _____
_____ is in it.
It takes place _____
It's about _____
In the end, _____

Movie2: It's a _____
_____ is in it.
It takes place _____
It's about _____
In the end, _____

Group Activity: Share your riddles and your group will try to guess the answer.

Retrieved from <http://www.bogglesworldesl.com>

Appendix C

BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory

Sample Items

Emotional Self-Awareness

- 7. It's fairly easy for me to express feelings.
- 9. I'm in touch with my emotions.
- 23. It's hard for me to share my deep feelings with others.
- 35. It's hard for me to understand the way I feel.

Assertiveness

- 22. I'm unable to express my ideas to others.
- 37. When I'm angry with others, I can tell them about it.
- 67. When I disagree with someone, I'm able to say so.
- 82. It's hard for me to say "no" when I want to.

Self-Regard

- 11. I feel sure of myself in most situations.
- 24. I lack self-confidence.
- 40. I have good self-respect.
- 56. I don't feel good about myself.

Self-Actualization

- 6. I try to make my life as meaningful as possible.
- 21. I really don't know what I'm good at.
- 36. In the past few years I've accomplished little.
- 51. I don't get enjoyment from what I do.

Independence

- 3. I prefer a job in which I'm told pretty much what to do.
- 19. When working with others, I tend to rely more on their ideas than my own.
- 32. I prefer others to make decisions for me.
- 48. It's hard for me to make decisions on my own.

Empathy

- 18. I'm unable to understand the way other people feel.
- 44. I'm good at understanding the way other people feel.
- 55. My friends can tell me intimate things about themselves.
- 61. I would stop and help a crying child find his or her parents even if I had to be somewhere else at the same time.

Interpersonal Relationship

- 10. I'm unable to show affection.
- 23. It's hard for me to share my deep feelings with others.
- 31. I'm a fairly cheerful person.
- 39. It's easy for me to make friends.