

THROUGH THE STUDENT' LENS: PERCEPTIONS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE-INFORMED INSTRUCTION AND COMMUNICATIVE ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

Emotional factors significantly dictate the success of English Language Learners (ELLs) in navigating cognitively demanding tasks. While Emotional Intelligence (EI) is widely linked to academic achievement, its practical application as a deliberate instructional resource within specific local Indonesian contexts remains under-examined. (Objective) This case study aims to investigate how students perceive the development of core EI skills encompassing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills and how these perceptions shape their communicative engagement at Homey English. Employing a qualitative study design, data were collected through a questionnaire distributed to 25 ELLs, supported by classroom observations to assess learners' emotional responses and interaction patterns during EI-informed instruction. The findings revealed that most students exhibited high self-awareness and strong empathy, which directly contributed to increased self-esteem and supportive peer networks. However, self-regulation yielded moderate results, with only 34.6% of students fully able to handle academic stress, indicating that managing impulsivity requires explicit pedagogical intervention. Furthermore, learners demonstrated stable motivation and a high preference for collaborative problem-solving. These results imply that integrating explicit, context-sensitive EI routines into language instruction effectively minimizes the affective filter. By addressing emotional needs, teachers can foster a more resilient, interactive, and psychologically safe environment that significantly enhances learners' willingness to communicate.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, ELL, Classroom Interaction

Abstrak

Faktor emosional secara signifikan menentukan keberhasilan Pembelajar Bahasa Inggris (ELL) dalam menyelesaikan tugas-tugas yang menuntut kognitif. Meskipun Kecerdasan Emosional (EI) secara luas dikaitkan dengan prestasi akademik, penerapannya secara praktis sebagai sumber instruksional yang disengaja dalam konteks lokal Indonesia tertentu masih kurang diteliti. Studi kasus ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki bagaimana siswa memahami perkembangan keterampilan inti EI yang meliputi kesadaran diri, pengaturan diri, motivasi, empati, dan keterampilan sosial, dan bagaimana persepsi ini membentuk keterlibatan komunikatif mereka di Homey English. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner yang dibagikan kepada 25 ELL, didukung oleh observasi kelas untuk menilai respons emosional dan pola interaksi siswa selama pembelajaran yang berlandaskan EI. (Hasil) Temuan

menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas siswa menunjukkan kesadaran diri yang tinggi dan empati yang kuat, yang secara langsung berkontribusi pada peningkatan harga diri dan jaringan teman sebaya yang suportif. Namun, pengaturan diri menghasilkan hasil yang moderat, dengan hanya 34,6% siswa yang sepenuhnya mampu mengatasi stres akademik, menunjukkan bahwa mengelola impulsivitas membutuhkan intervensi pedagogis yang eksplisit. Lebih lanjut, peserta didik menunjukkan motivasi yang stabil dan preferensi yang tinggi untuk pemecahan masalah kolaboratif. Hasil ini menyiratkan bahwa mengintegrasikan rutinitas kecerdasan emosional (EI) yang eksplisit dan peka konteks ke dalam pengajaran bahasa secara efektif meminimalkan filter afektif. Dengan mengatasi kebutuhan emosional, guru dapat menumbuhkan lingkungan yang lebih tangguh, interaktif, dan aman secara psikologis yang secara signifikan meningkatkan kemauan peserta didik untuk berkomunikasi.

Kata Kunci: Kecerdasan Emosional, ELL, Interaksi di Kelas

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INTRODUCTION

English Language Learners (ELLs) are increasingly required to navigate cognitively demanding tasks while developing linguistic proficiency. In globalized educational contexts, learners are expected to produce sophisticated linguistic output even while their foundational English forms are still emerging (CCSSO, 2014). While instructional scaffolding and multimodal resources are often employed to reduce linguistic load (Lukens, 2013; Bunch et al., 2014), the success of language acquisition is heavily dictated by emotional factors. Emotional intelligence (EI), defined as the capacity to recognize, understand, and regulate emotions (Goleman, 2002), is a critical psychological asset in the classroom. Previous research has consistently linked high EI levels with increased eagerness to participate in brain-based activities, higher self-esteem, and improved cooperative skills (Bora, 2012; Nuniek, 2018). Studies by Zarezadeh (2013) and Yunita (2014) further confirm that emotional factors such as self-control and mood coordination are significant predictors of speaking achievement and overall academic success.

Despite the well-documented correlation between EI and language achievement, a significant gap remains in the literature regarding its practical application. While EI is recognized as a trait that influences success, its role as a deliberate *instructional resource* within specific local second language acquisition (SLA) contexts remain under-examined (Rafieyan et al., 2014; Grench et al., 2016). Most existing studies focus on EI as a static correlation with GPA or test scores, but fewer provide empirical evidence on how explicit

EI-informed classroom routines shape the actual communication experiences and perceptions of learners in an Indonesian setting (Dau, 2022). There is a pressing need to investigate how teachers can move beyond purely grammatical objectives to foster the emotional resilience necessary for communication in challenging ELL environments.

Research has consistently linked EI with educational outcomes, including classroom functioning and academic achievement (Brackett & Mayer, 2003), and academic achievement (Gil-Olarte, Palomera, & Brackett, 2006) and productive instructional environments (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010). Students with higher EI tend to regulate stress more effectively and build more positive peer relationships, which can support resilience and engagement in learning (Zhoc et al., 2018; Kant, 2019; Sekaryanti et al., 2023). However, while EI is well documented as a contributor to academic success, its role as an instructional resource within second language acquisition (SLA) especially in specific local classroom contexts—remains comparatively under-examined (Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2020; Parker et al., 2017). This gap is particularly relevant in contexts where English learning is increasingly linked to educational mobility, workplace opportunities, and cross-cultural communication (Petursdottir & Oliveira, 2023), and where learners commonly report anxiety and pressure as obstacles to progress.

Responding to this gap, the present study investigates the integration of EI-informed instruction for Indonesian ELLs at Homey English. Conceptually, this research treats EI as a developable competence involving self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 2002). Practically, this case study aims to investigate how students perceive the development of these core EI skills, specifically emotion recognition and stress management—and how such perceptions relate to their communicative engagement. Furthermore, it evaluates the effectiveness of this classroom intervention from the learners' standpoint. By situating EI-informed routines within this local context, this research seeks to demonstrate how social-emotional growth can be strategically leveraged to create a more resilient, interactive, and psychologically safe language learning environment.

Therefore, this case study aims to illustrate how students situated in classroom practices oriented toward emotional intelligence (EI) view their engagement and communication as they develop English language skills in Homey English. By situating EI in everyday ELL instruction, this study seeks to provide evidence on how emotional and social competencies

can be leveraged to improve participation, interaction quality, and learning experiences in ELL settings in Indonesia (Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2020; Parker et al., 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Nature of Emotional

Intelligence Emotional intelligence as a psychological factor in this research, such as high and low levels of EI. Those factors contribute for students to speak English. The students of a high level of emotional intelligence are more eager to attend and brainbased activities because they have self-esteem and able to manage to cooperate with others due to their social skills. But the student with a low level of EQ is not less relations with the society. It caused by the lack of motivation, self-confidence, and self-awareness. Goleman states that emotional questions were as a way to recognize the feelings of oneself and others and to motivate themselves and manage the emotions of oneself well in community life (Bora, 2012, p. 2094). So that, emotional intelligence as the ability to enhance thought and understanding of interpersonal dynamics through joining intelligence, empathy, and emotions in daily life. The researchers believe that researcher concludes that emotional intelligence is a capacity in us to recognize the feeling, motivation, and management of emotion to social interaction with others and the environment. The components of emotional intelligence as intrapersonal (self-awareness and selfexpression), emotional self-awareness (to be aware of and understand one's emotions), assertiveness (to effectively and constructively express one's emotions and oneself), independence (to be self-reliant and free of emotional dependency on others), self-actualization (to strive to achieve personal goals and actualize one's potential, empathy (to be aware of and understand how others feel optimism (to be positive and look at the brighter side of life, etc. Besides that, Trait EI as a constellation of emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies. The trait emotional intelligence questionnaire (TEIQue) organized under four factors there are well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability and component of EI such as emotional self-awareness (Genç, G., Kuluşaklı, E. & Aydın, S., 2016, p. 92).

According to Goleman (2002), emotional intelligence is a person's ability to manage their emotional life with intelligence maintaining the appropriateness (of emotion and its expression)

through self-awareness, self-control, self-motivation, empathy and social skills. Given the importance of emotional intelligence to support student learning outcomes, knowledge about emotional intelligence is important for every teacher to be able to develop students' emotional intelligence. Students who have emotional intelligence can control themselves well in following the learning process and have a high awareness of learning. This is a great asset for students to achieve learning outcomes with high standards in various things, both academic and non-academic. In line with that, Robert and Cooper (as cited in Ginanjar, 2001) stated that emotional intelligence is the ability to feel, understand and effectively apply the power and sensitivity of emotions as a source of energy, emotions, connections and human influences. Individuals who can understand the emotions of other individuals can act and make decisions appropriately without causing detrimental impacts to both parties. Emotions can arise every time an individual receives a stimulus that can affect the mental condition and cause turmoil from within. Emotions that are well managed can be used to support success in various fields because when emotions arise, individuals have more energy and are able to influence other individuals. Everything that is produced by these emotions when utilized properly can be applied as a source of energy needed to complete the task of influencing others and creating new things.

Emotional Intelligence in Language Learning

Learning is the process of interaction between students and educators and learning resources in a learning environment. Learning is assistance provided by educators so that the process of acquiring knowledge and science, mastery of skills and habits, and the formation of attitudes and beliefs in students can occur. In other words, learning is a process to help students learn well. The learning process is experienced throughout a person's life and can apply anywhere and anytime. Learning has a similar meaning to teaching, although it has a different connotation. Learning is the empowerment of students' potential to become competencies. This empowerment activity cannot be successful without someone to help. Sanjaya (2008) stated that learning is a process of cooperation between teachers and students in utilizing all existing potential and resources, both potential that comes from within students such as interests, talents, and basic abilities that are possessed, including learning styles and potential that exists outside students such as the environment, facilities, and learning resources as an effort to

achieve certain learning goals. Dimiyati and Mudjiono (2002), learning is a process organized by teachers to teach students to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Language competencies are increasingly important in a globalized world and it is no longer an advantage for an academician, a professional, to speak just one language, rather, it could be a drawback to speak only one language. Emotional intelligence is a significant factor in language teaching in the world of language education. All students can be successful students in language learning.

METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative study to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), informed instruction, and English acquisition in an Indonesian ELL context at Homey English. The qualitative aspect (the reflections) was employed to document classroom dynamics and learner responses in context. Participants were selected from the cohort of junior- and senior-level Homey English learners (ages 14–22) and their teachers. The student sample employed saturation sampling, comprising all students from the chosen classes, totaling to 25 students across two levels (Sugiyono, 2008).

The study consisted of instruments for capturing learner EI and learning behaviors. Data were collected using one main instrument: a semi-structured questionnaire administered for the EI-integrated learning period to capture learners' EI-related responses (Sugiyono, 2005). Procedures for questionnaire administration followed established guidance in the methodology literature, with only contextual adjustments made to fit the Homey English classroom setting (Sugiyono, 2005; Sugiyono, 2013).

The qualitative data from the survey of student reflections were examined through coding and thematic analysis, concentrating on recurring patterns associated with learners' emotional control, classroom participation, peer relationship, and engagement in English tasks. To enhance the reliability and reproducibility of the findings, the study utilized triangulation by analyzing themes and patterns across surveys and reflections to discern convergence or significant discrepancies among data sources.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the case study at Homey English suggest that the use of Emotional Intelligence (EI)-informed education is vital to improve the communicative experiences of Indonesian English language learners (ELLs). This study observes a difference in the way how learners handle the psychological challenges of learning a second language by integrating EI strategies such as emotion recognition and self-regulation into language activities. This discussion assesses the results on the five dimensions of EI and its implications for classroom engagement. The results are organized according to the distribution of five major EI variables, namely, self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Table 1. The Frequency Distribution of Students' Emotional Intelligence

Dimension	No	Questionnaire Item	SA (%)	S (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
<i>Self-Awareness</i>	1	I am confident in my abilities and the decisions I make.	42.3	46.2	11.5	0	0
	2	I can easily recognize my emotions when I experience them.	19.2	53.8	15.4	11.5	0
	3	I express my thoughts and feelings openly.	7.7	46.2	26.9	15.4	3.8
<i>Self-Regulation</i>	4	I can stay calm under study pressure.	0	34.6	23.1	26.9	11.5
	5	I can control my impulsiveness when necessary.	3.8	23.1	69.2	3.9	0
	6	I can easily adjust my plans when circumstances change.	0	3.9	68.1	28.0	0
<i>Motivation</i>	7	I strive to reach my full potential in learning.	0	30.8	50.0	7.7	11.5
	8	I tend to look on the positive side of situations.	0	30.8	46.2	23.1	0
	9	I generally feel happy and content.	7.7	50.0	30.8	11.5	0
<i>Empathy</i>	10	I can understand how other people feel in different situations.	26.9	42.3	26.9	3.9	0
<i>Social Skills</i>	11	I feel responsible to help those in need.	3.8	26.9	46.2	11.5	11.6
	12	I prefer to study independently rather than in groups.	0	26.9	42.3	19.2	11.5
	13	I enjoy building and maintaining relationships.	0	15.4	53.8	23.1	7.7
	14	I am open to considering different perspectives.	7.7	26.9	53.8	11.5	0
	15	I am good at finding solutions to problems.	7.7	30.8	61.5	0	0

As seen in Table 1, the majority of the students had a high degree of self-awareness. This is shown in item 1 where 88.5% of the respondents (the total number of SA and A) were confident in their capabilities and decisions. In line with this, in item 2, 73% of the students

were able to identify their feelings. The results show that the respondents had a good internal basis for comprehending their own psychological state in the process of learning. This finding aligns with the theoretical framework provided by Goleman, who describes self-awareness as the fundamental ability to recognize one's own feelings (Bora, 2012). In the context of Homey English, this high level of awareness directly contributes to the increased confidence in expressing ideas mentioned in the findings. When learners are aware of their emotional state, they become more eager to attend brain-based activities because they possess the necessary self-esteem to engage (Bora, 2012). This outcome strengthens the research by Gench, Kullusakli, and Aydin (2016), which identified a positive correlation between EI and productive language skills, particularly speaking.

When it comes to managing emotions, students tend to be moderate or neutral. In the item on control of impulsivity, item 5, most of the respondents (69.2%) remained neutral, which signifies that there are some attempts at self-control but not yet a fully consistent one. On the other hand, 28% of the respondents disagree that flexibility in dealing with changes in plans (item 6) is a barrier for some students. However, the students' ability to stay calm under pressure (item 4) was well balanced with 34.6% of the respondents able to handle academic stress well. This indicates that the student are aware of their emotions but the skill of manage emotions of oneself well in community life needs to be explicitly taught (Bora, 2012). Classroom observations revealed that routines focused on EI served to reduce anxiety-related behaviors. This supports the idea that self-regulation methods are important for ELLs to persist in hard speaking activities. Zarezadeh (2013) indicated that emotional intelligence is a significant antecedent of academic achievement. Homey English also provides students with methods to manage their impulsivity and academic stress, which contributes towards creating a psychologically safe learning environment that helps minimize the affective filter frequently linked with language performance.

Students showed willingness to reach their learning potential (item 7) with 30.8% agreement and 50% neutrality. Item 8 also showed a significant optimism, with only 23.1% of students reporting having difficulty in seeing a positive aspect of a situation. This connects positively with the results in item 9 where half of the respondents (50%) felt happy and satisfied in their English learning process. The interpersonal dimension, particularly empathy, showed

very positive results. In item 6, 69.2% of students (combined SA and A) were able to understand others' feelings in various situations. This was reinforced by item 7, where the majority of respondents felt a social responsibility to help others, although the majority (46.2%) remained neutral regarding taking concrete action. Students showed a good disposition to accept different ideas (item 11) with 34.6% of them agreeing and strongly agreeing and 53.8% neutral. In terms of problem-solving (item 13) 38.5% of the respondents felt capable in finding solutions. However, in terms of learning independence (item 4), the findings showed a tendency of students to still appreciate teamwork, with just 26.9% preferring to study independently rather than in groups. This emotional satisfaction is not merely a positive byproduct, it is a functional driver of language acquisition. Pishghadam (2009) demonstrated that learners who achieve higher EI scores exhibit greater levels of vocabulary knowledge and overall language success. The stable motivation observed at Homey English suggests that learners are more inclined to view challenges in a positive light when EI instruction is integrated. This optimism is essential for the persistence of second language communication, which is consistent with Goleman's assertion that emotional intelligence (EI) is characterized by the ability to motivate oneself in the face of adversity.

The high levels of empathy (69.2% understanding others' feelings) and the preference for collaborative learning (Item 10) underscore the interpersonal benefits of EI instruction. This is reinforced by Item 11, where 30.7% of respondents feel a social responsibility to help others, although 46.2% remain neutral regarding taking concrete action. These high levels of empathy, combined with the preference for collaborative learning (where only 26.9% prefer studying independently in Item 12), underscore the interpersonal benefits of EI. Empathy-building prompts allow students to respond to others respectfully, creating a supportive peer network and confirming the definition of EI as the ability to understand interpersonal dynamics (Bora, 2012). Furthermore, the students' disposition to accept different perspectives (Item 14, 34.6% agreement) and their perceived capability in finding solutions (Item 15, 38.5% agreement) reflect the social skills necessary for meaningful classroom interaction. This collaborative atmosphere is consistent with Gench et al. (2016), who argued that social skills enable students to cooperate effectively, thereby improving their speaking achievement through active participation.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the incorporation of Emotional Intelligence (EI)-based instruction as a method to improve the English learning experience of Indonesian English Language Learners at Homey English. The findings indicate that including emotional intelligence dimensions—self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills—into English instruction substantially enhances a more productive and psychologically secure learning environment. Elevated levels of student self-awareness (88.5%) and empathy (69.2%) constitute essential foundations for confidence and peer support. The intermediate outcomes in self-regulation (34.6%) indicate that the management of academic stress and impulsivity necessitates explicit instructional support. Ultimately, EI-focused routines alleviate the affective filter, enabling learners to manage the cognitive and emotional challenges of second language learning with enhanced resilience and readiness to communicate. This study, despite findings, has some limitations that must be recognized. This case study, centered on a particular Indonesian ELL context at Homey English with a limited sample size of 25 students, may not provide conclusions that are widely applicable to all EFL environments. The data predominantly depends on self-reported surveys, which may be influenced by social desirability bias or transient emotional states.

These findings provide several directions for future research. Future research may utilize a longitudinal approach to monitor the enduring impacts of emotional intelligence teaching on language proficiency across multiple academic years. Moreover, comparative studies including bigger and more diverse populations (e.g., contrasting public school students with those from private language centers) would yield a more comprehensive insight into the impact of local environments on emotional dynamics. Future researchers are encouraged to examine the interplay between emotional intelligence training and digital multimodal resources, assessing how visual media can further alleviate the verbal burden for low-proficiency English language learners. Ultimately, examining the educator's viewpoint and their personal "emotional labor" in executing emotional intelligence routines would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the classroom environment.

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