

Role of Emotional Intelligence in Developing Speaking Skills: A Study Conducted with Reference to Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna

Arivarasy Thanushan

Department of English Language Teaching, University of Jaffna

marivarasy@univ.jfn.ac.lk

The role of emotional intelligence contributes as a significant factor for academic achievement in the area of research. In second language learning research, emotional skills seem to be essential as individual variations in language production. Speaking skill is considered as one of the most challenging by language learners in its expression. Students are reluctant to cooperate and actively engage in English-speaking activities. Thus, it is the responsibility of teachers to recognize learners' real emotions and how they affect their ability to speak in the classroom. The objective of this study is to find out whether the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of the students affects their attitudes in terms of active involvement in speaking in the classroom. The design of the study is descriptive and quantitative where the researcher presented data in numerical and descriptive form. In order to achieve this goal, twenty-three ESL students from the Faculty of Arts/Social Sciences, University of Jaffna were randomly selected. The data were collected using EI questionnaires, journal writing, and structured interviews. The questionnaire focuses on key dimensions of EI: emotional perception, emotional comprehension and emotional regulation. Data are analysed using thematic analysis. The findings reported in this study highlight that students with low EI constantly compare themselves with their peers and feel shy to express themselves because of mistakes they may make while speaking. Pair works and group works are preferred by the students with a low EI to share their ideas, offer alternative suggestions and linguistic feedback. It is observed that the usage of their mother tongue is also an adding factor occasionally to increase their EI in the second language classroom. The implications of the findings may encourage teachers to focus on activities which will enhance the emotional intelligence of the students.

Keywords: Attitude, Emotion, Second Language, Speaking, Participation