

ENHANCING STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THROUGH FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

РОЗВИТОК ЕМОЦІЙНОГО ІНТЕЛЕКТУ СТУДЕНТІВ У ПРОЦЕСІ ВИВЧЕННЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ

The article is devoted to the phenomenon of emotional intelligence (EI) and its pedagogical implications, particularly in the context of foreign language acquisition. The author provides the analysis of key theoretical approaches to emotional intelligence, including the ability model, the mixed model, and the trait model, as well as pays attention to intrapersonal and interpersonal components of emotional intelligence, emphasizing the complexity and multidimensional nature of the concept.

The author highlights the growing interest of many researchers in exploring this phenomenon, especially its connection to students' academic efficiency. Emotional intelligence is believed to facilitate students' academic performance, impact their motivation, mental health, psychological and social adjustment, resilience, as well as interaction with others. Students' inability to recognize, express, and appropriately manage their emotions can become a substantial obstacle to effective learning.

In the context of foreign language instruction, emotional intelligence is proved to support the development of communicative competence, intercultural sensitivity, and autonomy of learners. The author proposes practical strategies for integrating the development of emotional intelligence into the language classroom through reflective practices, collaborative learning, role-plays, project work, etc. Special attention in the article is given to the expansion of emotional vocabulary, which contributes to a more meaningful communication and deeper intercultural understanding. The importance of creating emotionally supportive learner-centered environment, providing constructive and timely feedback, and recognizing learners' emotional needs and states is also highlighted. The author concludes that EI-oriented teaching approaches foster deeper learning, stimulate learners' motivation and self-regulation skills, thus preparing them for more confident and effective communication beyond the learning environment.

Key words: emotional intelligence, foreign language learning, academic achievement, motivation, empathy, self-regulation, teacher-student relationship.

У статті розглядається феномен емоційного інтелекту (EI) та його педагогічні наслідки, зокрема в контексті вивчення іно-

зменої мови. Автор проводить аналіз ключових теоретичних підходів до емоційного інтелекту, включаючи модель здібностей, змішану модель та модель рис, а також розглядає внутрішньоособистісний та міжособистісний аспекти емоційного інтелекту, підкреслюючи складність та багатовимірний характер цього поняття. Наголошується зростаючий інтерес багатьох українських та зарубіжних дослідників до вивчення цього феномену, особливо його зв'язку з академічним успіхом здобувачів освіти. Важається, що емоційний інтелект сприяє їхній академічній успішності, впливає на мотивацію, психічне здоров'я, психологічну та соціальну адаптацію, стійкість, а також на комунікацію з іншими. Нездатність студентів розлізнати, виражати та належним чином керувати власними емоціями може стати суттєвою перешкодою на шляху до ефективного навчання.

У контексті вивчення іноземних мов доведено, що емоційний інтелект сприяє розвитку комунікативної компетентності, міжкультурної чутливості та автономії здобувачів освіти. У статті запропоновано практичні стратегії інтеграції емоційного інтелекту у заняття з іноземної мовою, використовуючи рефлексивні вправи, колаборативне навчання, рольові ігри, проектну роботу тощо. Особливу увагу приділено розширенню емоційного словника, що сприяє більш змістовному спілкуванню та глибшому міжкультурному розумінню. Підкреслюється важливість створення підтримуючого середовища з боку викладача, наданням конструктивного та своєчасного зворотного зв'язку, а також врахування емоційних потреб і станів студентів у процесі навчальної взаємодії та оцінювання. Автор підsumовує, що підходи до навчання, орієнтовані на розвиток емоційного інтелекту, сприяють глибшому засвоєнню навчального матеріалу студентами, підвищенню їхньої мотивації, розвитку емоційної стійкості та формуванню навичок саморегуляції, готовучи їх до більш впевненого та ефективного спілкування за межами навчального середовища.

Ключові слова: емоційний інтелект, вивчення іноземних мов, академічні досягнення, мотивація, емпатія, саморегуляція, взаємодія між студентом і викладачем.

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Problem statement. In today's realities, full of numerous challenges, constant stress and uncertainty, the development of emotional intelligence has become a fundamental priority, vital for success in all areas of life, including personal, academic and professional domains, interpersonal communication, etc.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is no less important than cognitive skills. It is viewed as the ability to recognize, comprehend, regulate, and apply emotions in a constructive way, both in personal experiences and in social interactions. J. Mayer defines emotional intelligence as "the capacity to validly

reason with emotions and to use emotions to enhance thought" [8, p. 3].

Nowadays, most employers prioritize emotional intelligence over other skills since they realize its considerable effect on workers' increased productivity and better collaboration, efficient team work and networking, enhanced mental health and overall well-being. Individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to manage their time well, stay motivated and focused on their goals. They communicate more effectively, build stronger and more meaningful relations, navigate conflicts with greater ease and handle

stress more successfully. Being a key differentiator in workplace success, emotional intelligence accounts for 90% of what sets high-performers apart from the ones with similar knowledge and technical skill levels (LinkedIn, 2024).

Research analysis. The study of the phenomenon of emotional intelligence has extended far beyond the domain of psychology, engaging experts from other disciplines and spheres of knowledge. The theoretical aspects of emotional intelligence have been widely examined by J. Mayer and P. Salovey, D. Goleman, R. Bar-On, R. Boyatzis, A. Lynn, D. Schilling, A. McKee, etc. There are various approaches to understanding this term which to a certain extent complement each other. As the field of emotional intelligence is evolving, new perspectives start to emerge.

Emotional intelligence has been conceptualized through several theoretical models, the most prominent of which include 'the ability model' (presented by J. Mayer and P. Salovey), 'the mixed model' (by D. Goleman, R. Bar-On), and 'the trait model' (by K. Petrides and A. Furnham).

- The *ability model* defines emotional intelligence as a set of interrelated cognitive abilities that involve "perceiving emotions, generating emotions to facilitate thought, understanding emotions and emotional knowledge, and reflectively regulating emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth" [9, p. 197]. This model treats EI as a form of intelligence that emphasizes mental processing of emotional information.

- The *mixed model* incorporates emotional competencies, social skills, personality traits, and motivational factors to provide effective human functioning. It is particularly beneficial in the fields where interaction, teamwork, leadership, and emotional adaptability are essential. R. Bar-On identified emotional intelligence as an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures [3].

- K. Petrides and A. Furnham introduced the concept of '*trait emotional intelligence*' as a constellation of emotional self-perceptions embedded within the personality structure. This framework conceptualizes emotional intelligence not as an ability or skill that can be measured with objective performance tasks, but rather as a collection of self-perceived abilities and behavioral dispositions related to how individuals identify, understand, express, and manage emotions in themselves and others.

The diversity of the models reflects the complexity of emotional intelligence as a phenomenon, suggesting that no single framework can fully cover all aspects of how humans understand, use, and manage emotions.

Viewing emotional intelligence as an integrated, dynamic entity, researchers identify two key aspects in its structure: *intrapersonal*, which is the ability to

manage oneself, and *interpersonal* (or *social*), which involves maintaining relationships with others.

- The *intrapersonal aspect* of emotional intelligence includes factors such as recognizing one's own emotions, adequate self-esteem, self-confidence, self-control, tolerance, self-discipline, proactiveness, adaptability, curiosity, openness to new experiences, drive for achievement, and optimism.

- *Interpersonal, or social* intelligence focuses on managing relationships, and is developed through qualities like sociability, openness and sincerity, empathy, respect, the ability to consider the interests of others, the capacity to adequately assess and anticipate interpersonal relationships, and teamwork skills.

The development of both intrapersonal and interpersonal components of emotional intelligence is a key focus of modern education. Nowadays, there is a growing interest in studying students' emotional intelligence in correlation to their educational success. The research conducted by Y.C. Chang and Tsai (2022), W. Saud (2019), Z. Shafait et al. (2021), M. Chamizo-Nieto (2021), and S. Hamid (2025) revealed the link between emotional intelligence and educational efficiency, showcasing how the development of EI in students can facilitate their academic performance, impact their motivation, psychological and social adjustment, resilience, and improve teacher-student relations. Emotional intelligence is viewed as a factor that can contribute to the reduction of psychological pressure that can cause the decline in intellectual abilities [7; 10; 11].

The relevance of this topic is determined by the necessity for educational practitioners, academic policy-makers, and teachers to take emotional intelligence issues more seriously and incorporate them into university programs. The integration of EI-oriented training into curricula – especially in foreign language instruction – has gained significant attention among Ukrainian scholars, and is described in the works by I. Hoshtanar (2025), O. Kostyuk L. Didyk (2022), O. Kovalchuk, H. Dekusar (2022), O. Krekoten (2023), etc.

The **aim of our research** is to analyze the role of emotional intelligence in foreign language acquisition and explore some pedagogical strategies to foster emotional intelligence among university students in the language classroom.

Presentation of the main material. In the modern educational landscape, emotional intelligence is increasingly recognized as a key to students' academic success, particularly in the realm of foreign language learning. While cognitive abilities and linguistic competence have traditionally been the primary focus of language instruction, recent research highlights the significance of learners' emotional capacities in fostering effective communication, intercultural understanding, and motivation. A foreign language classroom serves as an appropriate

platform for modelling real-life situations and practicing certain emotional and behavioral patterns in various communication contexts.

Emotions are not merely by-products of the learning process – they are an integral part of it. Positive emotions – like curiosity and excitement – can enhance motivation and engagement, making it easier for the learners to absorb new information. Conversely, negative emotions can interfere with their progress. Stress, fear or anxiety can reduce learners' ability to focus on, perceive and retain information, thus creating an obstacle for effective learning.

D. Goleman identifies five main components of emotional intelligence, including:

- *Self-awareness* – the ability to identify and comprehend one's own emotions, emotional triggers, their impact on your thoughts and behavior;
- *Self-regulation* – the ability to control and direct one's emotions, to redirect the disruptive ones, and adapt them to changing circumstances;
- *Motivation* – an inner drive to achieve goals with enthusiasm and persistence;
- *Empathy* – the ability to understand and share the feelings of others;
- *Social skills* – the ability to interact effectively, to be agile enough to mitigate, avoid or resolve conflicts and disagreements, to work collaboratively in social or professional settings [6].

In the context of language acquisition, the development of these abilities plays a crucial role in shaping learner's attitudes, behavioral patterns, and outcomes. Thus,

• *Self-awareness* enables learners to identify their emotional responses (such as anxiety, boredom, joy and excitement, satisfaction, insecurity, demotivation etc.) to various learning activities, classroom dynamics, and performance outcomes. Based on their emotional responses, learners can adopt relevant strategies to maintain motivation and mitigate negative states which can impede their linguistic progress.

• *Self-regulation* allows learners to manage emotions that often accompany the process of language learning. The most common emotional barriers include fear of speaking or making mistakes, frustration with slow progress, or difficulties connected with putting into practice certain grammar or lexical structures. If not managed properly, these emotions can create a vicious cycle, leading to increased frustration and anxiety of learners.

• *Motivation*, both intrinsic and extrinsic, is a key determinant of language learning success, influencing learners' persistence, engagement, willingness to deal with challenges and achieve goals. Intrinsically motivated students get positive emotions and pleasure from the learning process. They exhibit greater enthusiasm and perseverance, aren't afraid of failures, actively engage in learning activities, are ready to practice the language beyond the classroom -these qualities

are vital for successful long-term language acquisition and retention.

• *Empathy* enhances communication skills, enabling learners to adequately interpret and respond to emotional and sociocultural context of their interlocutors, understand cultural peculiarities of the language they are learning, which is essential for building stronger, more meaningful relations.

• *Social skills* play a key role in promoting efficient communication and collaboration among learners in real-life context. The ability to initiate conversations, participate in group activities, change communication style in connection with the context, minimize interpersonal tensions, and give/receive feedback contributes to a safer and more supportive language learning environment.

Being a teachable skill, emotional intelligence can be developed and perfected with time. Within a foreign language classroom, the main strategies aimed at its development include implementing:

- tasks focused on developing emotional resilience and empathy;
- group work and collaborative tasks which promote social skills and teamwork;
- reflective tasks that promote self-awareness and emotional regulation.

One of the core pedagogical aims of EI-based teaching is to create a supportive environment that boosts students' confidence and motivation, facilitating their continuous improvement. Students develop their emotional intelligence more effectively when they feel their classroom environment maintains psychological safety and inclusiveness [1; 2].

To create a supportive, learner-centered environment, teachers should adopt a classroom culture in which active participation is prioritized over flawless performance, and mistakes are regarded as valuable opportunities for learning. Teachers are expected to deliver constructive, timely feedback that, firstly, emphasizes learners' progress rather than exclusively their outcomes; secondly, takes into account learners' individual strengths, efforts, emotional needs, initial language proficiency level, and other relevant factors. I. Hoshtanar states that through consistent support and constructive feedback from the teacher, learners gain a heightened sense of confidence and reduced sense of fear and anxiety, which encourages their active involvement and helps them become emotionally mature participants in communication [1]. M. Chamizo-Nieto believes that establishing positive and strong teacher-student relationships has a beneficial influence on the effectiveness of the educational process and psychological well-being [4].

A variety of classroom strategies can be used to promote emotional intelligence while developing linguistic competence. Incorporating ice-breakers and warm-up activities at the beginning of lessons is an

effective approach. These tasks are designed to reduce emotional barriers, stimulate engagement, and foster interpersonal connection within the classroom. To further encourage social interaction and empathy, teachers should provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively – in pairs, small groups, or larger teams. Role-play activities, brainstorming, debates, case studies, and project work require contribution of each member. Dealing with various real-life situations in a foreign language, students not only master their dialogic and monologic speaking skills, but also learn to tackle problems collaboratively, listen actively to one another, adopt and respect differing viewpoints, and respond appropriately using both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies.

For example, ecology students may be asked to work on a group project focused on sustainability and ecological ethics, exploring the question: "If ecosystems could speak, what might they say about the way they are being treated?" Students are expected to personify ecosystems – such as oceans, rainforests, or wetlands – and articulate the impact of human actions from the ecosystem's imagined perspective. Here, emotional intelligence is closely connected with the development of ecological consciousness, as students learn to collaborate, reflect, and emotionally engage with solving complex environmental issues from multiple perspectives.

Among the learning activities aimed at enhancing self-awareness and self-regulation, a particular emphasis is placed on reflective practices. Students are encouraged to critically analyze their past emotional experiences, identify the underlying causes of specific emotional responses, anticipate and evaluate the consequences of their emotional behavior. For example, after a meaningful event in their life (whether it is a journey, an exam or participation in a conference) they might be asked to reflect on their emotions and recall the moments they enjoyed or found frustrating. Such reflective practices help learners become more conscious of their emotional responses and better equipped to manage them in the future.

Broadening students' emotional vocabulary in a foreign language through EI-oriented tasks is an important complement to this process. The emotion word bank can range from basic emotion-related adjectives and nouns (such as happy/happiness, angry/anger, sad/sadness, excited/excitement, etc.) to more nuanced and context-specific ones (such as disheartened, anxious, flabbergasted, passionate, hot-blooded, indifferent, impatient, etc.), as well as emotionally charged words (such as love, success, loss, freedom, justice, betrayal etc). This lexical enrichment enables students to express themselves with greater clarity and precision. Furthermore, it helps them recognize and interpret diverse emotional states and messages in conversations, as well as better perceive emotional nuances in authentic literature

and media, thus promoting effective communication and intercultural competence.

Since teaching approaches, activities, selected materials, and the overall classroom microclimate significantly affect students' engagement and motivation, they must be thoroughly planned and systematically implemented to optimize the educational process. When students are acquainted with diverse learning styles, strategies and tools, they can choose the ones that suit their preferences, interests and emotional needs best (for example, for memorizing new vocabulary or organizing new material) – then they can become even more motivated and self-directed. Contemporary online learning platforms offer a wide range of interactive tools, including discussion forums, live chats, collaborative whiteboards, gamified quizzes, all of which help sustain a high level of learners' motivation and immersion, allowing them to track and regulate their own learning progress.

Conclusion. To sum up, incorporating emotional intelligence into foreign language instruction offers significant pedagogical advantages. By maintaining emotionally supportive learner-centered environment, encouraging collaboration and reflective thinking, educators can create favorable conditions not only for mastering students' linguistic competence, but also for developing essential life skills like self-awareness, self-regulation, emotional resilience, empathy, all of which constitute emotional intelligence. When students feel psychologically safe, receive constructive feedback, and are granted autonomy in their learning, they become more engaged, motivated, and emotionally mature participants in communication. The following EI-oriented approach is considered effective both for language acquisition and overall academic achievement.

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