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## **INTEGRATING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE INTO THE L2 CLASSROOM: AFFECTIVE FACTORS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING**

**ABSTRACT:** This paper explores the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in second language (L2) learning, drawing on Goleman's (1995) framework, which highlights the ability to understand and manage emotions, develop social awareness, and build effective interpersonal relationships. Emotional development is recognized as a key aspect of education in Bloom's taxonomy and is also emphasized in the Croatian English language curriculum. In the L2 classroom, affective factors such as anxiety, confidence, and empathy significantly influence learners' engagement and success. Approaches like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) naturally support the development of EI by fostering meaningful interaction and social awareness. The paper reviews the relevance of affect in language education and presents a series of practical activities designed to help L2 teachers cultivate emotional intelligence skills, such as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation, together with linguistic competence.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, second language learning, affective factors, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

## **INTEGRISANJE EMOCIONALNE INTELIGENCIJE U UČIONICU STRANOG JEZIKA: AFEKTIVNI FAKTORI U UČENJU I NASTAVI JEZIKA**

**APSTRAKT:** Rad istražuje ulogu emocionalne inteligencije u učenju stranog jezika, oslanjajući se na Golemanov (1995) model, koji ističe sposobnost razumevanja i upravljanja emocijama, razvijanja socijalne svesti i izgradnje efikasnih međuljudskih odnosa. Emocionalni razvoj prepoznaje se kao ključni aspekt obrazovanja u Blumovoj taksonomiji, a naglašen je i u Nacionalnom kurikulumu za engleski jezik Republike Hrvatske. U nastavi stranih jezika afektivni faktori, poput anksioznosti, samopouzdanja i empatije, snažno utiču na motivisanost i postignuća učenika. Pristupi poput komunikativne nastave jezika (eng. Communicative Language Teaching – CLT) prirodno podstiču razvoj emocionalne inteligencije kroz negovanje smislenih interakcija i jačanje socijalne svesti. U radu se razmatra uloga afektivnih faktora u obrazovanju jezika i predstavljaju se praktične aktivnosti, koje mogu pomoći nastavnicima da kod učenika razvijaju veste emocionalne inteligencije, poput samosvesti, empatije i regulacije emocija, zajedno sa jezičkom kompetencijom.

*Ključne reči:* emocionalna inteligencija, učenje stranog jezika, afektivni faktori, komunikacijska nastava.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI), defined as the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions in oneself and others (Goleman 1995), has increasingly become recognized as a key component of successful education. In addition to enhancing psychological well-being and interpersonal competence, EI plays an important role in shaping students' engagement, motivation, and self-regulation, which are essential skills for lifelong learning (Mayer et al. 2004). Educators who integrate EI development into their teaching practices can create more inclusive, empathetic, and emotionally safe learning environments, which in turn enhance academic performance and classroom relationships (CASEL 2020). In educational theory, the significance of emotional development is explicitly acknowledged in Bloom's taxonomy of learning domains, which highlights the affective domain alongside the cognitive and psychomotor domains (Bloom et al. 1956). Similarly, national frameworks such as the English language curriculum in Croatia (Ministry of Science and Education 2019) underscore the importance of affective factors, including empathy, cooperation, and intercultural awareness, in the development of communicative competence.

The relevance of emotions is especially important in the context of second language (L2) learning. Learning a new language is not only a cognitive process but also a deeply emotional one. It involves social risk-taking, self-expression, and the potential for anxiety and self-doubt (Horwitz et al. 1986; MacIntyre & Gregersen 2012). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes meaningful interaction and learner-centered communication, inherently supports the development of EI by encouraging empathy, collaboration, and social skills (Richards & Rodgers 2014). By engaging learners in authentic communication, CLT creates opportunities for emotional expression and regulation, stimulating both linguistic and interpersonal growth. A growing body of research in applied linguistics has shown that emotions such as enjoyment, curiosity, anxiety, and frustration significantly impact L2 learners' motivation, engagement, and overall success (Dewaele 2011; Dewaele & MacIntyre 2014). EI skills such as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation can help learners manage the emotional demands of the language classroom, nurturing greater confidence and more meaningful communication. However, despite the importance of developing learners' emotional skills, many L2 teachers mainly focus on linguistic skills. Integrating EI into L2

teaching supports both language development and broader educational aims, and can help students become more confident, empathetic, and socially responsible language users.

The aim of this theoretical and practical paper is to explore the importance of affective factors in L2 teaching, with a particular focus on the development of EI. It begins by examining the role of affective factors in the learning process, as highlighted in Bloom's taxonomy. Goleman's (1995) EI framework is then presented, followed by an overview of the socio-affective components in the Croatian English language curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of emotions and social skills in language learning. The paper also includes a brief review of the role of affect and emotion in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research. Finally, it offers several practical classroom activities to help L2 teachers support the development of learners' EI alongside their linguistic competence. These activities aim to develop skills such as empathy, self-reflection, emotional awareness, and interpersonal communication, which are essential elements for effective language acquisition and meaningful social interaction. The paper concludes with a summary of key points.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. *Bloom's taxonomy*

Today, most educational curricula are structured around learning objectives or outcomes that describe what learners should be able to do by the end of a learning period. One of the most widely adopted frameworks for defining these outcomes is Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom et al. 1956), which organizes learning into three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The cognitive domain focuses on intellectual abilities and knowledge acquisition, the affective domain addresses emotional development, attitudes, and values, and the psychomotor domain involves physical and motor skills. A revised version by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) updated the taxonomy by using action verbs to describe the hierarchical categories within each domain. In the cognitive domain, for example, the categories include remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The affective domain progresses through five levels of emotional engagement: receiving (e.g., passive listening), responding (e.g., class participation), valuing (e.g., showing commitment to an idea), organizing (e.g., integrating new values), and characterizing (e.g., acting consistently with one's values). The psychomotor domain, though less explicitly defined in Bloom's original work, encompasses the development of

coordination, manipulation, and movement-based skills. These domains are interrelated and dynamic, contributing holistically to learner development. Importantly, the affective domain aligns closely with EI, particularly in its emphasis on self-awareness, empathy, values, and emotion regulation. In the context of L2 education, this connection is especially relevant, as language learning involves emotional risk-taking, intercultural sensitivity, and interpersonal communication. Thus, integrating EI into L2 teaching is not only beneficial but also consistent with broader educational aims reflected in Bloom's taxonomy.

## 2.2. Emotional intelligence

The concept of EI emerged gradually through the work of several psychologists. One of the earliest references can be found in Thorndike's (1920) concept of *social intelligence*, which he defined as the ability to understand and manage people and to act wisely in human relationships. Maslow (1943) later introduced a hierarchy of human needs, which included *love and belonging*, emphasizing the emotional aspects of friendship, intimacy, and social connection. Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences further expanded the scope of human cognitive abilities by identifying *interpersonal* and *intrapersonal intelligences*, both of which are closely related to EI, as they involve understanding others' emotions and managing one's own thoughts and feelings. Building on these earlier ideas, Salovey and Mayer (1990) were the first to formally define EI as the ability to identify, understand, and regulate one's own emotions and those of others. They also emphasized the role of emotions in enhancing thought processes, known as emotional facilitation of thinking, which refers to how emotions can guide attention, support decision-making, and promote creativity. Additionally, their model includes the ability to manage emotions in ways that are socially responsible and promote positive interpersonal relationships. Later, Bar-On (1997) developed the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), one of the most widely used instruments for measuring EI. He described EI as a set of emotional and social competencies, skills, and facilitators that influence how effectively individuals cope with environmental demands and pressures.

The concept of EI became popular with Goleman's (1995) book on EI, which he applied to leadership and success in life and work. He defined EI as the ability to recognize, understand, and manage personal emotions as well as the emotions of others. Goleman presented a model which encompasses five elements of EI: self-awareness (understanding one's emotions and their impact on others), self-regulation (managing emotions), motivation (having a goal and controlling emotions to achieve

it), empathy (recognizing and considering the feelings of others, particularly when making decisions), and social skills (understanding one's emotions can aid in managing the emotions of others). Goleman (1995) argued that these emotional competencies can be learned and developed; moreover, EI can play an important role in personal and professional success. A summary of the domains of Goleman's (1995) Emotional Intelligence Model and competencies is shown in Table 1.

Domain	Emotional competencies
Self-awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional awareness</li> <li>• Accurate self-assessment</li> <li>• Self-confidence</li> </ul>
Self-regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional awareness</li> <li>• Trustworthiness</li> <li>• Conscientiousness</li> <li>• Adaptability</li> <li>• Innovativeness</li> </ul>
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional awareness</li> <li>• Commitment</li> <li>• Initiative</li> <li>• Optimism</li> </ul>
Social awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Service orientation</li> <li>• Organizational awareness</li> </ul>
Relationship management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Conflict management</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Change catalyst</li> <li>• Building bonds</li> <li>• Collaboration &amp; cooperation</li> <li>• Team capabilities</li> </ul>

Table 1. Goleman's (1995) Emotional Intelligence Model

### 2.3. *The English language curriculum in Croatia*

The English language curriculum in Croatia outlines key objectives for teaching English in elementary and secondary schools, specifically grammar schools. These include fostering learners' communicative and intercultural competences, supporting personal growth, and promoting lifelong learning (Ministry of Science and Education 2019). Recognizing English as a global lingua franca, the curriculum emphasizes the importance of developing learners' language skills, enhancing cultural awareness, and encouraging independent learning. The

curriculum is structured around outcomes grouped into three primary domains: communicative language competence, intercultural communicative competence, and autonomy in language acquisition (Ministry of Science and Education 2019). While the English language curriculum does not explicitly reference the concept of EI, it incorporates socio-affective strategies within the learner autonomy domain that implicitly support EI related skills.

As stated, the curriculum defines socio-affective competences for each educational stage within the domain of autonomous language acquisition. These competences reflect the gradual, developmentally appropriate acquisition of emotional intelligence skills, aligned with students' cognitive and emotional maturation. In this regard, the curriculum is consistent with Bloom's taxonomy, which outlines the progression of cognitive development from lower- to higher-order thinking skills. It also reflects aspects of Goleman's (1995) EI model, particularly in fostering skills such as self-awareness, empathy, emotional regulation, and social cooperation.

The following are examples of high school socio-affective competences ranging from the first to fourth year of study along with explanations of how they incorporate Bloom's taxonomy and Goleman's EI skills. Competences for four years of study are presented to demonstrate the incremental development of these skills through the years.

First year of high school:

Recognizes and uses complex socio-affective language learning strategies:

- focuses on learning goals, personal achievements, and available resources to reduce learning-related stress;
  - talks with others about learning difficulties;
  - develops collaborative learning for mutual support and encouragement.<sup>1</sup>
- (Ministry of Science and Education 2019: 92)

This learning outcome reflects both cognitive and emotional skill development. According to Bloom's taxonomy, this outcome involves *recognizing* and *using* strategies which align with the cognitive levels of *understanding* and *applying* strategies where learners identify emotional and social strategies and use

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<sup>1</sup>SŠ (1) EJ C.1.3. Prepoznaće i koristi se složenim društveno-afektivnim strategijama učenja jezika.

• usredotočuje se na ciljeve učenja, vlastita postignuća i resurse koji su mu na raspolaganju radi smanjenja stresa pri učenju  
• razgovara s drugima o poteškoćama u učenju  
• razvija suradničko učenje radi uzajamne potpore i ohrabrenja

them in appropriate learning contexts (Anderson & Krathwohl 2001). By focusing on learning goals, using the resources around them, and managing stress, in other words, by applying metacognitive and affective strategies, students will become involved in self-regulated learning. It also aligns with Goleman's (1995) EI framework by promoting *self-awareness* (identifying learning goals and stressors), *self-regulation* (using emotional strategies to manage emotions), *empathy* (discussing challenges with peers), and *social skills* (collaborative learning and mutual support). *Motivation* is implied based on students' focus on learner goals and use of resources to achieve these goals. In short, this outcome reflects the integration of emotional and cognitive competencies which are important for effective language learning and personal development.

Second year of high school:

Connects and applies complex socio-affective language learning strategies:

- creates a positive attitude by using positive statements while working on a task;
- manages their own emotional state and applies relaxation techniques for more effective learning;
- plans and manages group work on projects within regular teaching and learning.<sup>2</sup>

(Ministry of Science and Education 2019: 97)

This competence reflects intermediate cognitive and emotional development. According to Bloom's taxonomy, students *apply* and *connect* socio-affective strategies, transferring knowledge to real-world contexts (Anderson & Krathwohl 2001). Activities like using positive self-talk and planning group work demonstrate *application* and *analysis*, while managing projects involves *synthesis* and *evaluation*. In Goleman's (1995) framework, this includes *self-awareness*, *self-regulation*, *motivation*, and *social skills*, as learners manage emotions, stay focused, and collaborate effectively. Overall, this outcome highlights how cognitive and emotional abilities foster learner autonomy and EI in academic and social settings.

Third year of high school:

Analyzes and applies complex socio-affective language learning strategies:

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<sup>2</sup> SŠ (1) EJ C.2.3. Povezuje i primjenjuje složene društveno-afektivne strategije učenja jezika.

- stvara pozitivan stav pozitivnim izjavama tijekom rada na zadatku
- upravlja vlastitim emocionalnim stanjem i primjenjuje tehnike opuštanja radi uspješnijega učenja
- planira i upravlja radom u skupini na projektima unutar redovnoga učenja i poučavanja

- continues to develop collaborative learning;
  - works in a group while taking responsibility for achieving common goals and making decisions;
  - reflects on their own role and relationships with others, and discusses both their own and others' feelings with them.<sup>3</sup>
- (Ministry of Science and Education 2019: 103)

This outcome reflects mid- to high-level cognitive engagement in Bloom's taxonomy, especially through *application*, *analysis*, and *evaluation* (Anderson & Krathwohl 2001). Students use socio-affective strategies while critically reflecting on their role in group work, enhancing metacognitive awareness. It also aligns with Goleman's (1995) EI model by fostering *self-awareness*, *self-regulation*, *empathy*, and *social skills* through emotional reflection and collaboration. *Motivation* is reinforced as learners take responsibility and contribute to group goals. Overall, this outcome supports emotional growth and active, responsible participation which is important to both language learning and personal development.

Fourth year of high school:

Synthesizes complex socio-affective language learning strategies and evaluates their effectiveness:

- plans and manages group work on research projects and/or fieldwork;
- evaluates the effectiveness of the acquired strategies and their applicability in further developing one's personality and relationships with others.<sup>4</sup>

(Ministry of Science and Education 2019: 109)

This learning outcome shows an advanced stage of cognitive and emotional development. Aligned with the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, including *creating* and *evaluating* (Anderson & Krathwohl 2001), students manage complex tasks like research and assess their emotional strategies, demonstrating critical

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<sup>3</sup>SŠ (1) EJ C.3.3. Analizira i primjenjuje složene društveno-afektivne strategije učenja jezika.

• nastavlja razvijati suradničko učenje  
• radi u skupini uz preuzimanje odgovornosti za ostvarenje zajedničkih ciljeva i donošenje odluka  
• ispituje vlastitu ulogu i odnos prema drugima te s njima razgovara o vlastitim kao i osjećajima drugih

<sup>4</sup>SŠ (1) EJ C.4.3. Sintetizira složene društveno-afektivne strategije učenja jezika i procjenjuje njihovu učinkovitost.

• planira i upravlja radom u skupini na istraživačkim projektima i/ili terenskoj nastavi  
• procjenjuje učinkovitost usvojenih strategija i njihovu primjenjivost u dalnjem razvoju vlastite osobnosti i odnosa prema drugima

thinking and reflection. It also reflects Goleman's (1995) EI framework, promoting *self-awareness, regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills*. Overall, this outcome integrates higher-order thinking with emotional growth, equipping students for real-world challenges.

With regard to elementary school, competences under the domain of autonomous acquisition also suggest the development of socio-affective skills among learners, which can be compared with the development of EI skills. Due to word limits, only one example is given from Grade 3. Similar to high school competencies, there is a progression of socio-affective skills through the years, albeit at a more rudimentary level.

Grade 3 Elementary school:

Chooses and applies the most basic socio-affective language learning strategies:

- follows natural curiosity, thereby increasing motivation for learning;
- seeks help from a friend to solve a task to gain a sense of confidence;
- controls feelings of restlessness.<sup>5</sup>

(Ministry of Science and Education 2019:28)

This Grade 3 outcome supports early emotional development by guiding learners to recognize and manage emotions through simple socio-affective strategies, such as seeking peer support and managing restlessness. These skills align with the lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy, such as *remembering, understanding, and applying* (Anderson & Krathwohl 2001), as learners recall, grasp, and use emotional concepts in familiar contexts. From the perspective of Goleman's emotional intelligence framework, this outcome fosters the development of foundational emotional skills, including *self-awareness* (recognizing internal states), *self-regulation* (controlling feelings of discomfort), *motivation* (driven by curiosity), and *social skills* (engaging peers for help), all of which are important for early social and academic success (Goleman 1995). By integrating these cognitive and emotional competencies, the outcome lays an important foundation for learners' ongoing emotional growth and effective language learning.

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<sup>5</sup>OŠ (1) EJ C.3.3. Izabire i primjenjuje najosnovnije društveno-afektivne strategije učenja jezika

- slijedi prirodnu znatiželju i time povećava motivaciju za učenje
- traži pomoć prijatelja u rješavanju zadatka radi osjećaja samopouzdanja
- kontrolira osjećaj nemira

To sum up, despite the fact that the term emotional intelligence is not used in the Croatian English language curriculum, it nevertheless addresses important elements of this concept. It emphasizes the use of socio-affective strategies which are interconnected with learners' cognitive and emotional development. In addition, these strategies encourage learners to develop emotional self-awareness, to regulate their emotions, to increase their motivation for language learning, to develop empathy, and to promote their social skills.

#### 2.4. Second language acquisition and affective factors

Traditionally, SLA theories mainly focused on linguistic and cognitive processes involved in language learning, as well as the role of interaction, while little attention was given to emotions. Some early SLA researchers focused on *affect* as a variable that can influence L2 learning (Brown 1973; Curran 1976). Krashen's (1982) *Affective Filter Hypothesis* suggested that negative affect (e.g. inhibitions) can obstruct language learning, while positive affect can aid it. Many SLA studies have focused on anxiety, in particular foreign language learning anxiety, and its effect on L2 learning, including L2 performance (Horowitz et al. 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner 1991; Scovel 1978). Affect was also considered as an influential factor in early L2 motivation research, where studies showed that learners' positive attitudes toward the target language and its culture significantly contribute to their motivation to learn the language (Gardner & Lambert 1972; Gardner 1985).

More recent studies have turned to the role of emotions in L2 learning. For example, researchers have considered the relationship between anxiety and enjoyment (Dewaele & MacIntyre 2014), emotions and motivation (Teimouri 2017), and emotions, learner autonomy and engagement (Resnik & Dewaele 2021). With respect to EI, numerous studies have shown that EI is a contributing factor with regard to learner motivation (Barzegar & Sadr 2013; Le et al. 2023), anxiety and self-efficacy (Cong & Li 2022), and willingness to communicate (Zhang & Zhang 2023).

#### 2.5. Promoting EI skills through CLT

The main goal of L2 teaching within the CLT approach is to develop learners' communicative competence, which includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences (Canale & Swain 1983). CLT emphasizes the ability to use the target language in real-world contexts. Learners are encouraged to negotiate meaning rather than memorizing phrases and to use language purposefully,

for example, express opinions, make requests, resolve conflicts (Brown & Lee 2015). Teaching is learner-centered and learners are encouraged to develop learning strategies. In short, CLT emphasizes meaningful interaction and a focus on learner needs, which provides a conducive environment for fostering EI in the classroom. Collaborative activities such as pair work, group projects, role-plays, and problem-solving tasks promote the development of linguistic competence, but also essential emotional competences (Ghanizadeh et al. 2020). While learners engage in these social interactions, opportunities are created for students to develop principal EI skills, such as empathy, self-awareness, and social skills, which are key facets in Goleman's (1995) framework. For instance, learners can consider different perspectives and develop empathy while participating in role-plays, while social competence can be developed in group tasks which encourage collaboration, compromise, and leadership. In addition, group work can help learners manage their anxiety and they can gradually develop self-regulation and resilience. Because CLT is focused on the learner, it can encourage self-reflection and motivation.

In brief, CLT provides many opportunities for learners to develop their EI. Activities that involve reflection, peer interaction, role-play, or the sharing of personal experiences not only develop linguistic fluency but also foster emotional and interpersonal growth (Mercer 2011; Williams et al. 2015). Similarly, the development of emotional skills through various tasks can improve classroom dynamics, learner autonomy, communication skills, help manage L2 anxiety and build motivation (Ghanizadeh et al. 2020). As discussed above, education goals, L2 English language curricula and L2 research have shown the importance of developing individual affective and social skills, as well as emotional skills.

Many would agree that teachers play a key role in modeling and scaffolding learner emotions and EI in the language classroom (Williams et al. 2015). Moreover, by creating an enjoyable and emotionally safe classroom atmosphere, and establishing a good rapport with learners, teachers can make a significant contribution to both their linguistic and emotional development (Harmer 2015). Teachers may ask themselves: How can we help learners become more aware of their emotions? How can we support the development of empathy? How can we foster a sense of social responsibility among our learners? The following section outlines several classroom activities that teachers can use in the L2 classroom to help learners develop their EI.

### 3. PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG L2 LEARNERS

There are many practical activities that teachers can use to support the development of EI in L2 learners. Effective classroom activities include emotion-focused vocabulary and discussions, role-plays and drama, reflective journaling, collaborative group tasks, and problem-solving activities. Teachers are also encouraged to use authentic materials, such as stories, videos, interviews, to promote empathy and emotional understanding. Equally important is the creation of a supportive classroom environment, where learners receive positive feedback and feel emotionally safe.

This section presents several classroom activities aimed at promoting the development of language learners' EI, while also enhancing their English skills. Many are familiar tasks that teachers may have already used; however, the focus here is on encouraging emotional awareness, increasing motivation to learn English, and developing social and interpersonal skills. All the activities align with the Croatian English language curriculum, as well as Goleman's (1995) EI framework, including the skills of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social awareness, and relationship management.

*Activity 1.*

**Icebreaker**

**Talk about your most positive and most negative personality traits**

In the following activity students express their personal information to the class, which can be used as an ice breaker in an introductory lesson (Ghanizadeh et al. 2020: 145). Teachers ask learners to give a number of positive and negative personality traits (brainstorming). Examples of personality traits could include traits such as moody, opinionated, dependent, generous, egotistical, modest, easygoing, high-strung, etc. Teachers then provide definitions, examples, and demonstrations for each trait. Next, learners can be put into pairs or groups to talk about the personality traits they see as their strengths and weaknesses. Before asking them to share with the whole class, teachers can take a moment to describe their own traits, both positive and negative, as a way to model honest self-reflection and create a supportive atmosphere. It should be noted that teachers need to be sensitive to the feelings of learners and not push them to express anything they do not feel comfortable with. An example of the brainstorming activity is shown in Figure 1.

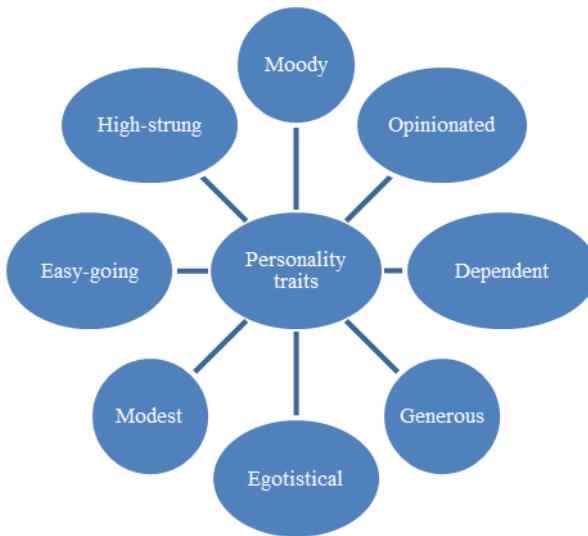


Figure 1. Talk about your most positive and most negative personality traits  
(Ghanizadeh et al. 2020: 145)

This classroom activity integrates vocabulary development but also encourages the development of EI according to Goleman's (1995) framework. By identifying and discussing personal traits, students develop *self-awareness* and begin to reflect on their emotions and behaviors. Discussing traits openly can help students practice *self-regulation*. For instance, admitting to being 'high-strung' or 'opinionated' may challenge learners to acknowledge and reflect on how they manage their emotional responses. In addition, hearing others talk about their traits can normalize emotional diversity and reduce defensiveness or shame. Working in pairs or groups encourages the development of *social skills* along with *empathy* and provides opportunities to practice respectful communication. The follow-up class discussion further supports respectful sharing and dialogue, which reinforces positive social behaviors. Moreover, taking the time to reflect on one's personality traits and set personal goals can enhance *intrinsic motivation*. Learners may be encouraged to develop traits they admire in others or work to improve those they perceive as limiting. Importantly, the teacher's role in modeling vulnerability by sharing their own personality traits establishes a trusting classroom climate. This reinforces both emotional safety and authenticity, creating the conditions for meaningful emotional learning.

## Activity 2.

## Working with language

## Using Adverbs of frequency

The following activity from the British Council (n.d.) website ‘Teaching English’ promotes language skills (adverbs of frequency) and encourages the development of EI. Typically, learners are asked often asked questions, such as ‘How often do you watch TV?’ or ‘How often do you play tennis?’, which are not very motivating. Instead, learners can be asked questions that can lead to reflective answers, for example, ‘How often do you laugh..., get angry..., argue with your parents..., make mistakes...., forget things..., change your mind..., really enjoy yourself...’ These types of open-ended questions can prompt learners to share real experiences and give teachers the opportunity to ask interesting follow-up questions. Learners complete the questions individually and think about real-life experiences that happened in their own lives. They can then ask other students the same questions and find out more about them. According to the British Council (n.d.) website, this approach can be called ‘personalized grammar’, which can support genuine communication and promote learner engagement. An example of the activity is provided in Table 2.

How often do you....	very often	often	sometimes	rarely	never
laugh					
get angry					
argue with your parents					
make mistakes					
forget things					
change your mind					
really enjoy yourself					

Table 2. Using adverbs of frequency to promote emotional intelligence in the L2 classroom (British Council n.d.)

This classroom activity supports both linguistic competence and EI development by encouraging learners to reflect on and discuss real-life experiences. Unlike standard grammar drills that involve routine or impersonal questions, this activity prompts students to respond to open-ended questions whereby learners are required to think about their own emotions and behaviors, which is aligned with Goleman's EI competencies, including *self-awareness*. Furthermore, by sharing their

responses in pairs or small groups, students develop *social awareness* and *empathy*, as they listen to and relate to others' experiences and perspectives. The interactive nature of the task also strengthens *relationship management*, as it encourages follow-up questions, turn-taking, and supportive communication. In managing how and what they share, learners also practice *self-regulation*, learning to communicate sensitive personal information respectfully and appropriately within a classroom setting. Finally, the task contributes to *motivation*, another of Goleman's key EI domains, as learners are likely to be more engaged when language use is authentic and personally meaningful. By promoting what the British Council terms as 'personalised grammar', the activity not only enhances language proficiency but also cultivates deeper emotional connections within the learning group, which supports genuine communication and strengthens classroom relationships.

*Activity 3.*

Class discussion – Cyber-bullying

Discussions are an important part of language learning and language teachers need to stimulate learners to talk as much as possible in the target language. Using topics that are of interest to learners will encourage them to participate, as well as facilitate the development of important emotional skills. The aim of the following activity, which can be found in Clare, Gregersen, and Mercer (2025: 118-119), is to connect topics of interest to learners, in this case cyber-bullying, with the development emotional skills, such as kindness, compassion, and empathy.

To introduce the topic of cyberbullying, teachers can create a fictional scenario involving a character who posts an unkind video about another person, Person A, online. The teacher describes how the video attracts hurtful comments, while some viewers remain silent. This provides an opportunity to explore the meaning of the term *bystander* and to discuss how Person A might be feeling. The class can then reflect on why some people leave negative comments and why others might say things they don't truly mean. Teachers might also ask whether learners think some individuals support bullies out of fear of becoming the next target. Students can then offer advice to different people in the story: the person who posted the video, Person A, and the bystanders.

To deepen the conversation, teachers might pose questions such as:

- a) How might this form of bullying impact on an individual's emotions and thoughts?
- b) In what ways can we show empathy and support to someone who's been cyberbullied?

- c) What can be done to address cyberbullying, and what kind of bullying is it  
– verbal, physical, or emotional?

As a creative follow-up, learners can work in groups to design digital posters using a tool like Canva. These posters should raise awareness about the dangers of cyberbullying. Once completed, the posters can be presented to the class and displayed around the room.

This activity helps students develop several EI skills based on Goleman's (1995) framework. By exploring how the character in the story might feel and discussing the role of bystanders, students are encouraged to think about their own emotions and those of others (*self-awareness* and *empathy*). Through discussing the role of bystanders and motivations behind harmful behavior, learners develop *social awareness* and *self-regulation*. When learners offer advice to the people involved in the story, they're practicing *perspective-taking* and responsible *decision-making*. Finally, creating posters in groups gives learners a chance to strengthen *social skills* and teamwork and gives them the opportunity to use what they've learned in a collaborative and meaningful way.

#### Activity 4

#### Using Literature

Using literature in the classroom can be an interesting way to develop many language skills, such as reading and reflective writing, as well as emotional skills. In the following activity, learners are asked to read the short story, *No Speak English* (Cisneros 1995: 1-10). The short story is presented in the Appendix.

After reading the story, learners are asked to write for ten minutes on one of the following questions and then discuss their answer with their classmates (Cisneros 1995: 9).

1. What do you suppose Mamacita expected of life in Chicago?
2. If you were in Mamacita's place, what would you do?
3. If you were the man, what would you do?
4. If you were Esperanza\*, would you try to help? Why or why not?

\*Esperanza Cordero – 14 year-old narrator

This activity, based on Cisneros's (1995) story, promotes EI by encouraging learners to reflect on the feelings and perspectives of the characters. The story carries strong emotional weight and draws learners to experience the hardship felt by the main character. As learners consider the emotions, challenges, and motivations of Mamacita, her husband and Esperanza, learners develop *empathy*, key elements of social awareness in Goleman's (1995) framework. The reflective writing task encourages students to connect their own experiences with those of the characters,

helping them develop *self-awareness* and express their thoughts more clearly. The follow-up discussion supports the development of *social skills*, such as active listening and *perspective-taking*, as students share and compare their viewpoints with peers. Finally, by imagining themselves in different roles learners are encouraged to enhance the skills of *emotion regulation* and *responsible decision-making*, as they need to consider the emotional consequences of their actions in real or imagined social contexts. Altogether, the activity supports both language development and emotional growth by encouraging meaningful communication based on empathy and introspection.

*Activity 5*

Reflective journal

A reflective journal is a collection of an individual's thoughts, feelings and observations. It can help learners improve their writing skills and think about their personal experiences, in this case, their language learning experience. In this activity, which is provided by Ghazizadeh, Hoorie, and Jahedizadeh (2020: 155-156), learners are asked to prepare a written journal and to think about what they learned from the lesson, how they learned the material, what their strengths and weaknesses were, and how they felt about the lesson. Learners are given prompts in the form of questions to help them sort their thoughts and ideas. At the end of the semester, learners are encouraged to reflect on their journal entries. Questions that learners are given to help them think about their learning experience are presented in Figure 3.

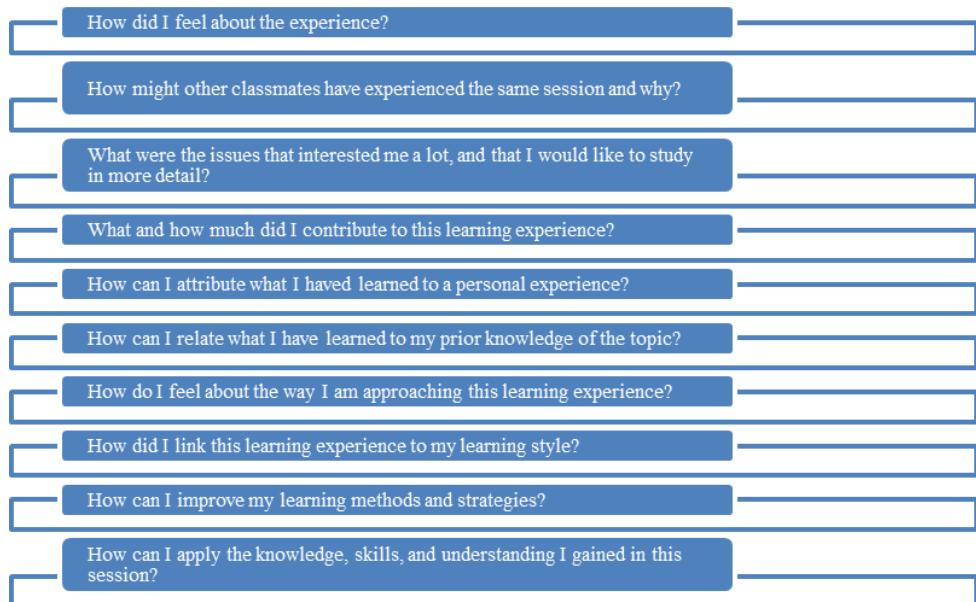


Figure 3. Journal Writing: Questions about learning experiences  
(Ghanizadeh et al. 2020: 156)

This reflective journal activity strongly aligns with Goleman's (1995) framework of EI, particularly in the areas of *self-awareness*, *self-regulation*, *motivation*, and *social awareness*. By encouraging learners to regularly explore their feelings, thoughts, and responses to their language learning experiences, the activity encourages *self-awareness*. Questions prompting learners to consider how they felt during the lesson or how their learning connects to prior knowledge also promote *self-reflection*, a key aspect of EI. In addition, prompts that ask learners to assess their learning strategies and contributions to class activities support the development of *self-regulation* and *motivation*, as students identify areas for growth and take responsibility for their learning. Moreover, the journal encourages *empathy* and *social awareness* by inviting learners to imagine how their classmates might have experienced the same lesson. Altogether, this activity promotes metacognition and emotional insight, reinforcing both cognitive and affective development in the L2 classroom in line with Goleman's theory.

**Activity 6**  
Project work

Project work in L2 learning is a student-centered approach, where learners use the target language to research, collaborate, and create a final product, such as a

presentation or poster. It promotes authentic communication and integrates language skills with real-world topics. In addition to building linguistic competence, project work encourages critical thinking, collaboration, and emotional intelligence by fostering empathy, self-reflection, and social awareness. The upcoming activity is designed to demonstrate what it means to be a global citizen by motivating students to collaborate in promoting positive actions within the broader global community. The activity is illustrated in Clare, Gregersen, and Mercer (2025: 169-170).

To begin, teachers explain that the United Nations launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 as a worldwide initiative aimed at reducing poverty, protecting the environment, and ensuring peace and prosperity for all. A short YouTube video presenting the 17 SDGs can be shown to the class. Students are then divided into groups, with each group assigned one of the 17 global goals to focus on. Teachers instruct the students to conduct detailed research on their assigned goal. Afterward, students are asked to create an action plan to implement the goal within their school or local community, including concrete steps, for example, setting up a recycling program for Goal 12: 'Responsible consumption and production.' The groups then design posters that depict the meaning of their goal, ways to achieve it, and highlights of their action plan. Each group presents their poster to the class, and the posters are displayed around the classroom to help increase awareness of the SDGs.

This classroom activity promotes EI by engaging learners in meaningful group work centered on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As learners research global challenges and design action plans for their school or community, they develop key EI skills such as *empathy*, *self-awareness*, and *responsible decision-making* (Goleman, 1995). Collaborative tasks foster interpersonal communication and teamwork, while reflecting on social issues encourages emotional awareness and ethical thinking. Moreover, this activity promotes *service orientation* (Goleman, 1995) which can be described as *empathy in action* and shows learners how they can contribute positively to their social environment. In short, by connecting language learning with real-world concerns, the activity supports both linguistic competence and emotional growth.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the integral role of EI in L2 education by drawing on Goleman's (1995) framework and situating it within broader educational theory and policy, such as Bloom's taxonomy and the Croatian English language curriculum. The discussion has noted how affective factors, such as empathy,

emotional regulation, and social awareness, play a role regarding learner engagement, motivation, and communicative competence. In the emotionally dynamic environment of L2 learning, EI assists learners in managing challenges such as anxiety, risk-taking, and self-expression. To help teachers implement EI development in practical ways, the paper has presented several classroom activities designed to promote important EI competencies along with language learning. These activities aim to strengthen learners' self-awareness, interpersonal communication, reflection, and social responsibility within the L2 context. It is recommended that teacher education programs include EI as a core component to better prepare educators for addressing the emotional needs of language learners. Future research might explore the long-term effects of EI-based instruction on learner outcomes, as well as its potential to create more inclusive, resilient, and socially conscious classrooms. As education continues to adapt to complex global demands, integrating EI into language teaching is both timely and necessary.

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## APPENDIX

### No Speak English

Mamacita is the big mama of the man across the street, third-floor front. Rachel says her name ought to be *Mamasota*, but I think that's mean.

5 The man saved his money to bring her here. He saved and saved because she was alone with the baby boy in that country. He worked two jobs. He came home late and he left early. Every day.

10 Then one day Mamacita and the baby boy arrived in a yellow taxi. The taxi door opened like a waiter's arm. Out stepped a tiny pink shoe, a foot soft as a rabbit's ear, then the thick ankle, a flutter of hips, fuchsia roses and green perfume. The man had to pull her, the taxi driver had to push. Push, pull. Push, pull. Poof!

15 All at once she bloomed. Huge, enormous, beautiful to look at, from the salmon-pink feather on the tip of her hat down to the little rosebuds of her toes. I couldn't take my eyes off her tiny shoes.

20 Up, up, up the stairs she went with the baby boy in a blue blanket, the man carrying her suitcases, her lavender hatboxes, a dozen boxes of satin high heels. Then we didn't see her.

25 Somebody said it's because she's too fat, somebody because of the three flights of stairs, but I believe she doesn't come out because she is afraid to speak English, and maybe this is so since she only knows eight words. She knows to say: *He not here* for when the landlord comes. *No speak English* if anybody else comes, and *Holy smokes*. I don't know where she learned this, but I heard her say it one time and it surprised me.

30 My father says when he came to this country he ate hamandeggs for three months. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Hamandeggs. That was the only word he knew. He doesn't eat hamandeggs anymore.

35 Whatever her reasons, whether she is fat, or can't climb the stairs, or is afraid of English, she won't come down. She sits all day by the window and plays the Spanish radio show and sings all the homesick songs about her country in a voice that sounds like a seagull.

40 Home. Home. Home is a house in a photograph, a pink house, pink as hollyhocks with lots of startled light. The man paints the walls of the apartment pink, but it's not the same you know. She still sighs for her pink house, and then I think she cries. I would.

Sometimes the man gets disgusted. He starts screaming and you can hear it all the way down the street.

45 Ay, she says, she is sad.

Oh, he says, not again.

¿Cuándo, cuándo, cuándo? she asks.

¡Ay, Caray! We *are* home. This *is* home. Here I am and here I stay. Speak English. Speak English. Christ!

50 ¡Ay! Mamacita, who does not belong, every once in a while lets out a cry, hysterical, high, as if he had torn the only skinny thread that kept her alive, the only road out to that country.

And then to break her heart forever, the baby boy who has begun to talk, starts to sing the Pepsi commercial he heard on T.V.

55 No speak English, she says to the child who is singing in the language that sounds like tin. No speak English, no speak English, and bubbles into tears. No, no, no as if she can't believe her ears.

[1989]

No Speak English, by Sandra Cisneros (1995: 5-6)

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INTEGRISANJE EMOCIONALNE INTELIGENCIJE U UČIONICU STRANOG  
JEZIKA: AFEKTIVNI FAKTORI U UČENJU I NASTAVI JEZIKA

*Sažetak*

Ovaj rad istražuje ulogu emocionalne inteligencije (EI) u nastavi i učenju stranog jezika, polazeći od stava da su emocije od suštinskog značaja kako za usvajanje jezika, tako i za šire obrazovne ciljeve. Emocionalna inteligencija, definisana kao sposobnost opažanja, razumevanja i regulisanja emocija (Goleman 1995), povezuje se sa motivacijom, angažovanjem i samoregulacijom (Mayer i dr. 2004). U okviru obrazovanja, afektivna dimenzija se odavno prepoznaće kao ključna komponenta učenja (Bloom i dr. 1956), dok savremeni okviri, poput kurikuluma engleskog jezika u Hrvatskoj (Ministarstvo nauke i obrazovanja 2019), naglašavaju empatiju, saradnju i interkulturnu svest kao sastavne delove komunikativne kompetencije. Rad ističe da je učenje stranog jezika po svojoj prirodi afektivno, jer podrazumeva socijalno preuzimanje rizika, samoizražavanje i suočavanje sa potencijalnom anksioznošću (Horwitz i dr. 1986; MacIntyre i Gregersen 2012). Istraživanja u oblasti primenjene lingvistike potvrđuju da emocije poput uživanja, radoznanosti i anksioznosti značajno utiču na motivaciju i uspeh učenika (Dewaele i MacIntyre 2014). Komunikativna nastava jezika (*eng. Communicative Language Teaching*), sa svojim fokusom na autentičnu interakciju i saradnju, prirodno podstiče razvoj EI kroz negovanje empatije, socijalne svesti i kooperativnosti (Richards i Rodgers 2014). Polazeći od Golemanovog (1995) okvira, rad analizira socio-afektivne komponente hrvatskog kurikuluma i ulogu afektivnih faktora u istraživanjima usvajanja drugog jezika. Zatim se nude praktične aktivnosti u učionici osmišljene da podstaknu empatiju, samorefleksiju i regulaciju emocija uz istovremenu podršku jezičkom razvoju. Zaključuje se da integracija EI u nastavu stranog jezika doprinosi formiraju samopouzdanijih, empatičnih i društveno odgovornih korisnika jezika, kao i stvaranju emocionalno podržavajućeg okruženja, koje unapređuje i jezički i interpersonalni razvoj.

*Ključne reči:* emocionalna inteligencija, učenje stranog jezika, afektivni faktori, komunikacijska nastava.

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