On the Relationship Between L2 Learners' Metaphorical Competence and Their Intrapersonal Intelligence

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Abstract

This study explored the possible relationship among L2 learners' metaphorical competence (MC) and their intrapersonal intelligence as well as their gender. A total of 126 (51 males and 75 females) upper-intermediate M.A. TEFL and B.A. English Literature/Translation at two Iran's universities participated. A test battery including the Bar-On EQ-i and metaphor tests were administered among the participants. A Pearson product-moment correlation and an independent sample t test were run. The correlation results indicated that there was a medium positive correlation between the L2 upper-intermediate learners' MC and assertiveness, and a small positive correlation between their MC level and intrapersonal/self-actualization/independence. The t test results showed that there was a significant difference in the males' and females' MC level. The findings suggest that L2 practitioners should include a report of L2 learners' MC level/intrapersonal intelligence as a profile to organize their classroom schedules and facilitate L2 learners' learning. More pedagogical implications are presented in the paper.

Keywords: Metaphorical competence, Bar-On EQ-i, Intrapersonal intelligence, Assertiveness, Self-actualization, Independence, Gender differences

Introduction

Learning a linguistic system is not the only aim of second or foreign language acquisition (SLA), but second or foreign language (L2) learners should become skilled at combining a communicative system with the linguistic system (Verhoeven & Vermeer, 2002). Using culturally appropriate metaphorical language, L2 learners can learn the ability of communication in an L2 (Danesi, 1994). In the last two decades, an increasing importance has been put on the investigation into the concept of metaphor (Kövecses, 2002; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Littlemore, 2001a). Danesi (1992) offered the concept of metaphorical competence as the knowledge of how a language reproduces concepts through metaphorical structuring. Increasingly, metaphorical competence has become a theme of inquiry during the past few

years (Azuma, 2005; Danesi, 1992; Hashemian & Talebinezhad, 2007; Littlemore & Low, 2006a).

A great deal of the work in the past on predicting academic success has focused on the influence of various cognitive abilities, sociodemographic factors, and economic variables (Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan, & Majeski, 2004). Emotional intelligence (EI) can be depicted as "the intersection between emotion and cognition" (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2007, p. 84); so, as a cognitive ability, it can predict academic success. Among EI scales contributing to L2 learning, intrapersonal intelligence with its subcomponents—self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self- actualization (Bar-On, 2002)—have essential role in L2 success (Fahim & Pishghadam, 2007; Parker et al., 2004; Shahmohamadi & Hasanzadeh, 2011). In today's interconnected emotional world, individuals' different cultural experiences affect other people's emotions (Kövecses, 2000), and metaphorical language appearing in everyday life (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) as a brand new experience can have relationship with intrapersonal intelligence. Moreover, as a crucial characteristic of cultural and individual life (Connell, 2002), gender differences have been studied by different SLA researchers (Grant & Rong, 1999; Wong, Lam, & Ho, 2002). A scrutiny of studies conducted so far (e.g., Fahim & Pishghadam, 2007; Meshkat, 2011; Shahmohamadi & Hasanzadeh, 2011; Smith, 2011) divulges that almost none of the studies have investigated the association between intrapersonal intelligence and metaphorical competence. Therefore, with the need to fill the research gap felt to exist, the current study is considered to have the benefit of a sense of innovation to shed more light on the issue at hand. In addition, this study sought out to detect the effect of gender on the metaphorical competence of upper-intermediate L2 learners.

Background

EI plays an important role in promoting or averting L2 learners' independence and their learning process (Dörnyei, 2001; Ehrman, 2000; Wenden, 1991). In L2 learning, investigating the role of emotional factors is not something new. There exist numerous methodologies in L2 learning dealing with emotional and psychological issues (e.g., suggestopedia; Krashen, 1981). Mixing the ability to comprehend and develop emotion with other miscellaneous parts of personality, some researchers (e.g., Bar-On, 2002) generated mixed approaches to EI consisting of cognitive ability and personality aspects. Bar-On's measure of EI was not considered as an outcome-oriented, but rather a process-oriented model (Bar-On, 2002). The Bar-On emotion quotient inventory (EQ-i), as a self-report measure of EI, was developed for 16 years and over individuals. The EQ-i was not used to measure personality traits or cognitive capacity, but to measure individual's ability to be successful in coping with the demands and pressures of surroundings (Bar-On, 2002; Dawda & Hart, 2000). In his model, Bar-On (2006) delineated a total EI score and scores on the subsequent five composite scales including 15 subscale scores for each individual's responses: intrapersonal (including self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-actualization), interpersonal (including empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationship), stress management (including stress tolerance and impulse control), adaptability (including reality-testing, flexibility, and problem-solving), and general mood (including optimism and happiness). Bar-On (2002) generally claims that EI contributes to an individual's general intelligence, proposing an indication of individual's potential to succeed in life; therefore, individuals with higher than average EIs are generally more successful in meeting demands and pressures of surroundings.

During the communication process, language, as a social transaction, involves interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences cooperation in intricate and delicate ways (Smith, 2011). In proportion to Diaz and Heining-Boynton (1995), the relations among various intelligences lead to acquiring authentic cultural understanding, but mostly the engagement of the intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences is the most imperative relation. In spite of the intricacies in quantifying and expressing aspects of self-knowledge, intrapersonal intelligence plays a very fundamental role in L2 learning and is vastly engaged in adult L2 learning (Smith, 2011). Horwitz (1995) asserts that "successful second language learning depends on the emotional responses of the learner" (p. 576); therefore, an individual with strong intrapersonal intelligence can not only realize both personal strengths and weaknesses, but also distinguish the way in which L2 learning challenges these personal issues. Every English language teaching (ELT) method or technique has been extended to meet learners' different needs. For example, the *silent way* emphasizes the development of learners' inner thinking or intrapersonal intelligence (Chen, 2005). Moreover, according to Robles (2002), some language learning tasks, for example, asking learners to do a questionnaire which helps them to be aware of their self-talk or reading activities in which learners raise their attitudes towards a problem, can help to practice the intrapersonal intelligence in the language classroom. In accordance with Shahmohamadi and Hasanzadeh (2011), intrapersonal scale has significant association with L2 learners' language achievement and can predict L2 achievement.

As Bar-On (2002) declared, the intrapersonal scale is composed of five subscales including emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, and independence. Emotional self-awareness indicates individuals' understanding of their own feelings and thoughts and how these feelings and thoughts influence their opinions and actions; thus, individuals with this ability, by managing their own emotions during communication, can smooth the progress of interactions (Bar-On, 2002). Assertiveness is the individuals' ability to communicate their feelings, beliefs, and thoughts and defend their own rights in a constructive way (Bar-On, 2002). According to Pipas and Jaradat (2010), assertiveness can build up relationships by diminishing stress from conflict and endow individuals with social support. Cassell and Blackwell (2002) supposed that assertiveness is on a continuum comprising positively assertive, non-assertive, and negatively assertive. *Positively assertive* means that individuals can express their emotions, achieve particular goals, experience tranquility in their lives. On the contrary, *non-assertives* are highly worried about their interpersonal communications and cannot set logical objectives. At last, *negatively assertives*, in spite of their high anxiety, are inclined to set socially detrimental objectives. According to Kawamoto (2007), English learning is not just a linguistic approach but an aspect of learning the culture; consequently, assertiveness can act as a powerful communication tool in this interconnected society. To be better communicators, English L2 learners should be exposed to English teaching approaches with assertive skills which are the impressive ways of learning English (Kawamoto, 2007). Moreover, Yong (2010) declared that assertiveness is a key component for L2 learners to be successful in both oral presentation and group discussion. Another intrapersonal subscale is self-regard which is individuals' estimation of themselves (Jorfi, Jorfi, Bin Yaccob, & Mad Shah, 2010). Nowadays, in the multifaceted international environment, EI, in didactic managements, strongly encompasses self-regard which is formed to use communication efficiency (Jorfi et al., 2010). In other words, individuals possessing high level of self-regard have higher EI which leads to develop communication effectiveness (Dong et al., 2005).

One of the last two subscales is *self-actualization,* which is the ability both to distinguish individual's latent capacities and to attempt to develop individual and team performance. According to Mohammad Ahmad Saleem (2009), self-actualization, in essence, indicates that the learner should learn and know how to be creative at high levels; learners can be creative intellectual learners. Gouws (2011) analyzed the concept of self-actualization into two constitutive parts (i.e., self and actualizing); consequently, the concept self refers to a uniquely dynamic participation on the basis of individual's eager selections, options, and decisions. As well, actualizing refers to a dynamic activity or the implementation of an activity (Gouws, 2011). Maslow (1970) talked about a very significant hierarchy of needs (Maslow's hierarchy), in which some basic food and shelter needs were at the bottom and self-actualization was at the pinnacle; hence, individuals can reach the highest level which is self-actualization, becoming entirely functional and being able to think and act autonomously. As Mohammad Ahmad Saleem (2009) declared, the concept of self-actualization is the building block of Maslow's (1970) work and it denotes the highest level of human growth, in which an individual attains the last level of psychological development. In accordance with Adesida, Aina, and Adekunle (2011), humans yearn for fulfillment self-actualization concept, as the peak in the hierarchy of human needs (Maslow, 1970), is related to communication. Therefore, learners' successful achievement of tasks results in self-actualization (Adesida et al., 2011). For instance, role-playing can be used to make development headed for self-actualization (Nash, 2005). Accordingly, in line with humanists, life experiences set off learning which is produced by emotional and cognitive needs and learners long to learn to be self-actualized and independent (Sherow, 2006); thus, L2 teachers should assist the self-actualizing process (Moskowitz, 1978).

The last subscale is independence which is the ability to be self-directed and to be free of emotional reliance on others (Bar-On, 2010). A plethora of studies have recently talked about learner independence and L2 learning (Benson, 2001; Dam, 2001) and tried to demonstrate the importance of making L2 learners more independent in their learning process (Benson, 2001). As Knowles (1997) confirmed, learners should be supported to develop an idea of learning as a lifelong procedure; teachers should use skills and strategies which can help the self-directedness of learners. Teachers would, then, explicitly deal with the issue of integrating independence into language courses (Cotterall, 2000), and learners would become independent L2 learners (Rajamoney, 2008). Moreover, independent learning is not just the teacher's assistance and input (Little, 1991). As a matter of fact, one of the most essential issues finding out whether learners attain their potential or not is their level of independence (Dafei, 2007). The successful independent learners should build up an optimistic attitude toward learning, being independent, and using self-management skills (Vanijdee, 2003). In addition, independent learners are very motivated to find opportunities to utilize L2 (Mardani & Moinzadeh, 2011). In a study, Shahmohamadi and Hasanzadeh (2011) claimed that independence has significant association with L2 learners' language achievement in Iranian context.

Among abundant factors regarding L2 learning, intrapersonal intelligence with its subcomponents, as mentioned above, can play a pivotal role in L2 learners' language achievement (Fahim & Pishghadam, 2007; Parker et al., 2004; Shahmohamadi & Hasanzadeh, 2011). Along with the literature reviewed, it can be wrapped up that L2 learners possessing higher intrapersonal intelligence communicate more easily and perform better in an L2 culture. Littlemore (2001b) disputed that a *metaphoric intelligence* indicating an ability to understand and produce new metaphors and helping L2 learners' learning process should be added to other intelligences. Since the earliest writings of civilized humanity, metaphors have been exploited

as teaching devices (Ortony, 1975); therefore, bringing metaphorical competence into play in an L2 is of the essence.

As Hashemian (2007) stated, metaphor, since the mid-1980s, has been considered as the study of all metaphorical language, and the other metaphorical devices were considered as particular kinds of metaphor. Metaphor has passed a long way to make major developments in educational exercises and the design of teaching materials (Kellerman, 2001). Nowadays, metaphor, as a crucial factor of communication, is of a great educational importance. The most important educational value of metaphors is to be seen in their possibility to transfer vividly learning and understanding from the known concept to the less well-known one (Ortony, 1975). Littlemore and Low (2006a) believed that thriving metaphor comprehension and production engages the ability to understand one entity in terms of another apparently unrelated entity. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) declared that the ordinary conceptual thinking and acting system is metaphorical in nature on the whole. Consequently, metaphor is not only as a substance of language but as a basis of human cognition, thought, and behavior, too. Danesi (1992) and Johnson and Rosano (1993) were the salient ones declaring that metaphors and idioms should not be overlooked by L2 curriculum. Because metaphors are the main means helping us to understand abstract concepts and act upon abstract interpretation (Lakoff, 1993), L2 teachers being aware of L2 learners' EI profiles can make them sentient about L2 metaphorical concepts figuring out the conceptual world. L2 learners are missing suitable teaching materials and methodologies to be familiar with metaphors in the language, so understanding and utilizing metaphors and idioms have been made hidden obstacles in the way of L2 acquisition process (Cameron & Low, 1999). Having lots of different communicative and cognitive functions, metaphors can be intricately recognized (Cameron & Low, 1999).

Metaphorical competence is defined as the knowledge that makes use of metaphorical structuring and demonstrates the reproduction of language concepts (Danesi, 1992). Littlemore and Low (2006b) showed metaphorical competence as a subcomponent of communicative competence. L2 learners by developing their metaphorical competence that has a widespread usage in everyday life can enjoy a good level of intercultural competence, which leads to L2 learners' dexterous communication and then a high-quality SLA process. More to the point, Winner (1982, p. 253) stated that if "people were limited to strictly literal language, communication would be severely curtailed, if not terminated." L2 learners need to be competent metaphorically to be successful in SLA; thus, their metaphorical competence level should be improved (Low, 1988). Littlemore (2001a) indicated that metaphorical competence is "important for foreign language learners, as it is likely to contribute to their overall language ability" (p. 466). In other words, as words often have more metaphoric than denotative meanings, L2 learners need to develop their ability to learn, produce, and interpret metaphor in the L2 and metaphorical competence as a necessity for native-like proficiency (Littlemore, 2001a). Azuma (2005) believed metaphorical competence in an English as an L2 situation may concern L2 learners in listening to, reading, and using English metaphorical expressions in proper ways in the writing, speaking, and understanding of the concepts of English metaphors and behind English metaphorical expressions.

On the whole, EI is fundamental for success in many areas of life (Cherniss, 2000); hence, the process of L2 learning as an important area of L2 learners' life should be affected by EI and more especially by intrapersonal intelligence (Fahim & Pishghadam, 2007; Shahmohamadi & Hasanzadeh, 2011). In an emotional world in which, according to Kövecses (2000), human emotions are significantly affected by individuals' different cultural experiences, metaphor, as a part of human conceptual system, being emerged in everyday life (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) can associate with intrapersonal intelligence. Gibbs, Leggitt, and

Turner (2002) asserted, also, that metaphorical language has an effect on emotional communication revealing thoroughly individuals' common conceptual interpretations of their emotional experiences. In chorus, using metaphorical language, individuals can establish reciprocal participation in a warm intimate atmosphere (Delfino & Manca, 2007). In addition, a great number of researchers found out gender differences plays a very imperative role in L2 academic achievement (Epstein, Elwood, Hey, & Maw, 1998; Grant & Rong, 1999; Van Houtte, 2004; Wong et al., 2002). Subsequently, gender, according to Connell (2002), is a vital dimension of social relations, culture, and individual life; thus, it may have some association with individuals' metaphorical competence wide-spreading in all the social, cultural, and individual life of the learners. However, the foregoing review of the literature has shown that more research is needed to shed light on the association among L2 learners' metaphorical competence level and intrapersonal intelligence and its five subscales (emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, and independence) and their gender. Afterward, based upon the abovementioned deliberations, the following questions stand out:

1. Is there any significant association between total intrapersonal intelligence and its five subscales (emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, and independence) and metaphorical competence among Iranian upper-intermediate L2 learners?

2. Do Iranian upper-intermediate female and male L2 learners possess different levels of metaphorical competence?

Methodology

Participants

After administering a standard language proficiency test, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) (Allen, 2004), 126 upper-intermediate learners out of a pile of 270 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners were chosen for this study. The total of 126 (51 males and 75 females) upper-intermediate M.A. learners majoring in TEFL and B.A learners majoring in English Literature and Translation from Shahrekord University and the University of Isfahan participated.

Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedure

To ensure the participants' homogeneity in terms of proficiency, OPT (Allen, 2004) with reasonable measures of validity and reliability, was used to screen learners. Measuring proficiency knowledge, the test consisted of 100 items which assessed participants' grammatical knowledge. According to the scoring guidelines by Allen (2004), the participants who scored lower than 68 out of the total possible score were excluded from the study and 126 upper-intermediate participants were selected for the study.

To determine the EI profiles of the participants, the Bar-On EQ-i (Bar-On, 1997) was administered to the same participants. As a self-report measure of emotional and social intelligence (Bar-On, 1997), the Bar-On EQ-i comprises 133 items in the form of short sentences assessed on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from very seldom or not true of me to very often or true of me). Taking nearly 40 minutes to complete, as mentioned above, this inventory measures five broad areas of skills and 15 factorial components. In the current study,

the Persian adaptation of Bar-On EQ-i (Bar-On, 1997) being reduced into 90 items was used. As Dehshiri (2003) reported, in Iran context, the translated Persian version of this questionnaire has good internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and constructs validity. Moreover, Motallebzadeh (2009) asserted that the translated Persian version is better to employ so as to pass up cross-cultural differentiations and the plausible questionnaire's content misinterpretation. The total reliability of the questionnaire estimated by Cornbach's alpha coefficient was reported at 0.93 (Samooei, 2002). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.84 was found.

In order to gather the required data regarding metaphorical competence level of the L2 learners, a metaphor test was designed by the present researchers to appraise the participants' metaphorical knowledge. Initially, 10 L2 learners resembling those in the main enquiry participated in a pilot study to detect the appropriacy of the metaphorical competence items. The test-retest and coefficient alpha estimates for the metaphor tests obtained in the pilot study support its suitability. The results indicated that it was highly reliable ($\alpha = 0.86$). Besides, the test validity was examined and confirmed by the expert judgments including one TEFL professor and two knowledgeable L2 teachers. The test was consisted of 148 multiple-choice items which should be answered in about 120 minutes. At last, the metaphor test was administered to the participants from the aforementioned universities to select the meaning of 148 metaphorical statements from some given options during the 2011-2012 academic year.

Results

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed between total intrapersonal intelligence and its five subscales (emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, and independence) and metaphorical competence scores among Iranian upper-intermediate L2 learners. Further, preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity.

Table 1

Results of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation for Intrapersonal Intelligence and Metaphorical Competence Scores

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. MC							
2. ES	.076						
3. AS	.350[**]	.312[**]					
4. SR	.095	.532[**]	.437[**]				
5. SA	.272[**]	.439[**]	.532[**]	.577[**]			
6. IN	.278[**]	.388[**]	.542[**]	.479[**]	.281[**]		
7. IntraS	.277[**]	.729[**]	.735[**]	.817[**]	.760[**]	.703[**]	

Note. MC = metaphorical competence; ES = emotional self-awareness; AS = assertiveness; SR = self-regard; SA = self-actualization; IN = independence; IntraS = intrapersonal scale; [**] $p <$ .05 (2-tailed).

As Table 1 depicts, there was a medium positive correlation between the scores of upper-intermediate L2 learners' metaphorical competence level and assertiveness, r (126) = .35, $p <$ .05, indicates that high levels of assertiveness associated with high scores in metaphorical competence. Moreover, there was a small positive correlation between intrapersonal, r (126) = .277, $p <$ .05, self-actualization, r (126) = .27, $p <$ .05, and independence, r (126) = .28, $p <$ .05, and L2 metaphorical competence level.

Moreover, an independent samples t test was conducted to see whether Iranian upper-intermediate female and male L2 learners possess different levels of metaphorical competence.

Table 2
Metaphorical Competence Means for Males and Females

	Gender	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	*Sig.*
Metaphorical Competence	Males	51	16.43	1.77	-3.63	.001
	Females	75	17.43	1.06		

As Table 2 shows, there was a significant difference in metaphorical competence scores for males (M = 16.43, SD = 1.77), and females (M = 17.43, SD = 1.06); t(74.35) = −3.63, p = .001. That is, the Iranian upper-intermediate female learners performed differently on the metaphorical competence tests in comparison with the male learners. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = −1, 95% *CI*: -1.55 to -0.45) was large (eta squared = .096); therefore, 9.6% of the variance in metaphorical competence scores is explained by gender. These results suggest that gender really does have an effect on the Iranian upper-intermediate learners' metaphorical competence level.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results related to the correlation between L2 metaphorical competence and total intrapersonal intelligence and, also, between L2 metaphorical competence and the five subscales of intrapersonal intelligence revealed the subsequent associations. There was a small positive correlation between L2 metaphorical competence level and intrapersonal, self-actualization, and independence. In addition, there was a medium positive association between L2 upper-intermediate learners' metaphorical competence level and assertiveness. Therefore, L2 upper-intermediate learners possessing higher levels of L2 metaphorical competence were more assertive, intrapersonal, self-actualizing, and independent and vice versa.

Regarding assertiveness, the results of the study confirm Yong's (2010) and Shahmohamadi and Hasanzadeh's (2011) explorations on the expediency of assertiveness in successful SLA. Moreover, Meshkat (2011) found a very weak significant relationship between assertiveness and L2 academic success. The difference in L2 learners' culture and norms may affect the result of assertiveness (Meshkat, 2011). In some cultures in which assertiveness is paid more attention, L2 assertive learners are more successful. As Kawamoto (2007) asserted,

teachers should introduce the concept of assertiveness and its efficiency in communication and cultural differences, afterward merge their method of English learning with assertive approach to motivate learners by assertiveness practicality.

Concerning the positive effect of intrapersonal intelligence on L2 learners' metaphorical competence, the study is in line with Parker et al. (2004), Fahim and Pishghadam (2007), and Shahmohamadi and Hasanzadeh (2011). An individual constantly tries to give his life a special form to direct it along with his goals; as a result, according to Adesida et al. (2011), self-actualization and L2 successful achievement are positively related. This study, also, demonstrates the positive relationship between self-actualization and L2 metaphorical competence which is somehow corresponding to Shahmohamadi and Hasanzadeh's (2011) investigation.

The positive correlation between L2 metaphorical competence level and independence being revealed in this study helps out the bulk of studies about learner independence and L2 learning (Benson, 2001; Dam, 2001) and depicts the status of helping L2 learners to make their learning process more independent (Benson, 2001; Cotterall, 2000; Rajamoney, 2008). Additionally, independence motivates learners to discover opportunities to exploit L2 (Mardani & Moinzadeh, 2011). In Iranian context, Shahmohamadi and Hasanzadeh (2011), also, declared the significant association between independence and L2 learners' language achievement. Thus, L2 learners getting pleasure from higher independence can express themselves and be successful in learning a novel language and accept an L2 and its customs and norms to perform better (Shahmohamadi & Hasanzadeh, 2011). Therefore, the positive relationship between assertiveness, intrapersonal, self-actualization, and independence and L2 metaphorical competence as the most crucial finding of this study showed that by improving metaphorical competence of Iranian EFL upper-intermediate learners toward being more assertive, intrapersonal, self-actualize, and independent toward learning an L2 and making metaphorical competence the fundamental focal point of EFL teachers' instructions learners can be more successful in L2 achievement.

Different researchers have explored the effect of gender differences on L2 achievement (Grant & Rong, 1999; Wong et al., 2002). On the basis of the data analyzed through the independent samples *t* test, the results suggest Iranian upper-intermediate female and male L2 learners did possess different levels of metaphorical competence. Subsequently, gender could be a factor influencing metaphorical competence of L2 learners. To be precise, the Iranian upper-intermediate female L2 learners performed better on the metaphorical competence tests than males. Furthermore, Bacon and Finnemann (1992) believed that females are more positive toward learning an L2 than males, so females may be more motivated to enhance their L2 metaphorical competence to communicate efficiently in an L2. Although Yeganehjoo and Ngee Thai (2012) in exploring lexical access in production of metaphorical expressions by proficient L2 learners asserted gender cannot be a significant factor affecting the results of the study, the present study confirms the effect of gender on metaphorical competence.

To wrap up the discussion, on the whole, the findings of the current study demonstrated L2 upper-intermediate learners with higher levels of L2 metaphorical competence possessed more assertiveness, intrapersonal, self-actualization, and independence and contrariwise. Furthermore, it was revealed that gender had an affinity for the metaphorical competence level of Iranian upper-intermediate learners.

Without a shred of doubt, successful L2 learners can appropriately achieve an L2 through their semantic and pragmatic competence, their capability of reasoning through logical thinking, and their language repertory and cognitive pliability. As discussed earlier, success in L2 learning can be achieved through both good levels of metaphorical competence and intrapersonal intelligence as an affective factor being a part of the emotional features of individual manners. Accordingly, some implications for L2 pedagogy can be extracted from the findings of this study. Mostly, L2 learners are not aware of their EI and its subcomponents and also the role of their metaphorical competence in L2 achievement. Consequently, it is the responsibility of an L2 teacher to help learners consciously find their EI profiles and, also, to develop the teaching method and techniques used in class, particularly those put emphasis on the features related to metaphorical understanding. More to the point, L2 materials developers can develop materials which emphasize particularly on the encouraging tools for L2 learning and also metaphorical competence.

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