

THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ON THE ACQUISITION OF SOFT SKILLS SUCH AS CRITICAL THINKING AND EMOTIONAL LITERACY SKILLS

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Abstract

The present day desideratum for the educational systems is to develop life-long learning skills and to support learners in the acquisition of soft skills as well. There are various fields concerned with the development of these skills and a closer look at the overlapping areas may be beneficial. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences highlights the characteristics of the interpersonally and intra-personally minded people. The proponents of the theory of emotional intelligence incorporate these two types of intelligences as core domains in which emotional literacy skills are rooted. Finally, the theory of speech acts includes these skills as accompaniment in the verbal interactions of human beings. As part of the present study, three textbooks from the series CAREER PATHS: *Agriculture, Hotels & Catering* and *Tourism* issued by Express Publishing UK have been analyzed with respect to their potential of developing students' critical thinking and emotional literacy skills by means of the speaking activities they suggest. The conclusion that can be drawn is that the dialogues have the potential of enhancing students' interpersonal abilities while encouraging polite communication – especially through the use of modal verbs (*can, could, may*) – and critical thinking by the extensive use of questions. However, in terms of emotional vocabulary, there is a scarcity of emotional words being employed, with a frequent occurrence of concepts such as: *happy, angry, sorry, worried*, which may seem a bit restrictive. Consequently, the mission of the English courses and educators is to extend the area of the communicative situations that rely on the diversification of this specific vocabulary, which may contribute to a broader understanding of people's interactions in the long run and to a genuine embracing of a relevant linguistic material.

Key words: soft skills, speech acts, emotional intelligence, emotional literacy, emotional lexis
