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Investigating The Role and Position of Linguistic Needs, Affective Needs, And Cultural Needs in Intercultural Communication: A Mixed Methods Study [In English]

Vahid Ghorbani [1*], Hamidreza Dowlatabadi [2]

1 Instructor, English Language and Literature Department, Arak, Iran
2 Assistant Professor, English Language and Literature Department, Faculty of Literature and Foreign Languages, Arak, Iran

***Corresponding author:** s39611171003@phd.araku.ac.ir

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ABSTRACT

Intercultural communication is a hot topic in today's world which focuses on the relationships among people all around the world. Finding the role of linguistic, affective, and cultural components in intercultural communication has been a big problem in foreign language situations. Thus, this study aims to investigate the role of linguistic, affective, and cultural components concurrently in Minoodasht, Iran. One hundred language teachers were selected through a convenience sampling procedure and then an Oxford placement test was run to check the homogeneity of the participants. An intercultural questionnaire also checked the intercultural communication level of teachers. In addition, 20 participants took part in the interview session willingly. To analyze the data, various quantitative and qualitative measures such as descriptive statistics, the Wilcoxon signed ranks test, and inductive content analyses were run. It was found that the linguistic component is the most vital macro-need in intercultural communication and the cultural and affective components were put in second and third place. It was also revealed that the affective component acts as a mediator between linguistic and cultural components. This study can be pedagogically important for language teachers and materials developers to include intercultural topics in their teaching sessions and textbooks respectively.

Keywords: Basic Needs, Cultural Need, Affective Need, Intercultural Communication, Linguistic Need.

Introduction

Intercultural communicative competence alludes to one's capacity to communicate efficiently with people from myriad walks of life. So, it could step over one cultural position to a transcultural occasion (Byram, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 1996; Deardorff, 2006; Jackson,2014). Lloyd and Härtel (2010) identified three subsets of intercultural communication (i.e.,

cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions). Byram (2000) also asserted that intercultural communicative competence involved attitude-based, knowledge-based, skills-based interpreting and relating, skills-based discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness.

The connection between linguistic elements, cultural elements, and intercultural communication was in the limelight of several researchers (e.g., Samovar et al., (2007), Malakloluntu & Selan (2011), Kramsh, 2013). These researchers asserted that it is improbable to demarcate linguistic and cultural elements or ignore their significance in multicultural communication. Not many types of research dealt with the position of affective factors in transcultural discoveries, for example, Tomkins (1962,1963) probed varied aspects of affective reactions including joyness, and ire. Matsumoto et al. (2005,2009) were one of the scientists who investigated the effect of emotions in intercultural studies. Tenzer and Pudelko (2015) asserted that the association between language, emotion, and culture was the missing link in intercultural studies. Finding out concurrently the significance of linguistic, affective, and cultural factors in transcultural encounters is a big gap that the current study is going to fill.

It is found that several empirical studies have examined the link between linguistic factors with cultural ones or linguistic factors with emotion in intercultural and cultural studies (Matsumoto, 2003). Erfani (2014), Tafaroji, et al. (2014), Jalali and Sa'd (2013), and Rashidi and Soureshjani (2011) were among the Iranian researchers who probed the association between linguistic and cultural elements and the effect of instruction on teachers' perceptions of teaching culture in language teaching programs. For example, Erfani (2014) found that Iranian teachers accentuated the value of intercultural teaching in language classes as a way to improve the cultural knowledge of learners. In another study, Tafaroji, et al., (2014) revealed that teachers had positive attitudes toward teaching cultural content in language programs.

What goes without saying is that any research investigated the role of linguistic, affective, and cultural components in transcultural encounters concurrently, which can be a huge schism in the era of transcultural research. Thus, this study has high gravity as it probes the position of linguistic, affective, and cultural elements at the same time in transcultural interaction in Iran's context, pinpointing which of these three needs are more important in multicultural communications. In a nutshell, the present research aims to show whether language, emotion, and culture can be deemed elements of intercultural communication and whether there is a connection among linguistic, affective, and cultural elements in transcultural encounters.

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Literature Review

Intercultural Communication (ICC)

Intercultural communicative competence alludes to one's capacity to communicate efficiently with people from multifarious walks of life (Byram, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 1996; Deardorff, 2006). Bouchard (2017) depicted intercultural communication as the capacity to cope with variations compared to variations in the own culture. Thus, language educators should not only familiarize learners with language techniques but they should ameliorate intercultural communicative competence among them so that they can nurture the dexterity to communicate fruitfully with individuals from multifarious cultures and language-based records in transcultural contexts. Language teachers need to position themselves as language and intercultural competence educator to fulfill their key teaching objective of enhancing intercultural communication skills (Sercu, 2006).

It has often been observed that language teachers generally give intercultural communications a little pre-eminence in education, and regard it as a usual by-product of second-culture teaching (Gu, 2016; Young & Sachdev, 2011). It is stated that although teachers might put in order the transference of second culture knowledge, they do not simply ameliorate students' transcultural viewpoints or touch in their instruction (Gu, 2016; Larzen-Ostermark, 2008). Put differently, "language teachers explicated intercultural communication as a collection of cultural realities connected with miscellaneous facets of the target language" (Gu, 2016, p. 267). Lloyd and Härtel (2010) introduced tri-subsets of intercultural communication, i.e., linguistic, emotional, and behavior-based facets. The cognition-based facet describes one's capacity to absorb and translate data; the emotional facet explicates various emotions and personality-based features; the behavior-based facet is pertinent to behaviors that individuals disclose while encountering individuals from miscellaneous nations (Lloyd & Härtel, 2010).

Transcultural capacity was not a fresh term in English language teaching anymore. There are 5 components in its explanation (Byram, 2000) which include attitude-based, knowledge-based, skills-based of interpreting and relating, skills-based of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness.

Different scholars such as Gay (2000), Irvine (2003), Sleeter (2001), and Zeichner and Melnick (1996) asserted that cultural elements had a fundamental impact on foreign language education. these days, a worldwide increasing fond emerged in transcultural competence has stirred an immense variety of scholars to thoughtfully and wholly have a look at the terms "language" "culture", and "interculture" as the fundamental concepts in

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transcultural encounters from multifarious viewpoints (Sharifian & Jamarani, 2013).

Byram (1997) maintained that foreign pupils (i.e., intercultural speakers), were able to link the foreign culture data to their language ability to use language-based data correctly as the position of the English language has severely turned into a worldwide means of communication. Garrido and Alvarez (2006) held the belief that language learners should be motivated to have competent intercultural speakers because language cannot be separated from cultures and societies.

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Linguistic and Cultural Elements in Intercultural Communication

Samovar et al. (2007) depicted the cultural elements as a complicated and sophisticated term that influences every aspect of social life" (p. 13). Language was also found as the largest hurdle of worldwide pupils. For instance, pupils face linguistic problems in facets such as speaking, comprehension, and writing; since the means of communication in specialized institutions is English. As English was not their first language, most of the English learners had numerous problems while speaking English (Malakloluntu & Selan, 2011).

To avoid bilingualism and biculturalism, we should put aside prejudices and stereotypes and intermingle intercultural communication with language learning (Fantini, 2006). Instruction of cultural elements in the era of English classes was a matter of disputation by scholars and teachers. Many educators maintained the idea that a second language can hardly be instructed without transferring the cultural elements in which the language was learned (Kramsh, 2013).

Li et al. (2004) stressed that it is improbable to acquire the linguistic element with no culture learning because culture is one of the main ingredients for teaching other languages. In foreign and second language education, it may also be possible to achieve the ultimate level of mixing languages and cultures in a class. The cultural aspect reflects the linguistic aspect (Liddicoat, 2008), and it was mirrored and transmitted by linguistic elements from one epoch to another epoch. Linguistic elements also reflect cultural realities into lexicons and, are shaped by cultural facts (Kramsch, 1998, as cited in Mirzaei & Forouzandeh, 2013).

Knutson (2006) offered that in place of instructing about another culture, our target should be to create in learners a transcultural cognizance. She argued that pupils can obtain a better vision of English teaching and its cultural factors by focusing on their first culture and contrasting it second culture. It is argued that educators are needed to instruct intercultural communicative competence along with communicative competence. Sercu

(2005) outlined the intercultural communication approach in foreign language learning, which includes individuals' willingness to take part in society to enhance their ability to see themselves through other worldviews.

Liddicoat and Scarino (2003) suggested how to teach and learn the transcultural process. At first, we should give the pupils activities to become aware of cultural variations and analogies. The second phase is that the teacher enables pupils to contrast their first and second cultures from miscellaneous angles. This comparison would end up with reflection and rendering of their findings. In this way, the pupils came to understand both cultures from their experiences and reactions.

Apart from linguistic factors, transcultural encounters focus on traits of society, thinking patterns, and miscellaneous nations. It also included understanding the varied cultural elements, language-based factors, and styles of individuals from other nations (Lauring, 2011). Educators and pupils cope with the creation and recreation of culture-based identities among their first linguistic and cultural elements and the second linguistic and cultural ones. English language teaching offered unparalleled outlets for pupils to taste transcultural communication and caused their amelioration to turn into intercultural speakers (Zhang, 2015).

Individuals might encounter varied hurdles in transcultural communications. The data of the target culture was a must factor as the fundaments of the language such as syntactic or lexicological features. What was more important was that a loss of transcultural cognizance could create a big obstacle in understanding a concept that was correct and comprehensible from a language-based attitude. In aggregate, people were much less tolerant of culture-based confusions and culture-based problems compared to grammatical or word slips (Jie, 2010).

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Affective Elements in Intercultural Communication

Feelings were essential as they provoked behavior. Grief and ire, for example, force us to do something, just as joy and cheerfulness reinforce behaviors. Incentive was a type of feeling, and if you wished to understand why individuals behave the way they do, you had to understand their affective features (Tomkins, 1962,1963). Tenzer and Pudelko (2015) found that linguistic hurdles could cause harmful emotions among people in transnational groups. Both the link between culture-based realities and linguistic variation and that between linguistic variation and affective reactions were disregarded factors in transcultural interactions. Emotion can be described as a mental state of action readiness that originated from the cognitive appraisal of events or thoughts; had a phenomenological tone; was

accompanied by physiological processes; and was often expressed physically (Bagozzi et al., 1999, p. 184).

Negative affective features hemmed in people readily; people tried to like each other affectively and in their lifestyles. Harmful affective traits prevent the most perceptive people from pondering or behaving aptly. If non-positive feelings dominated us and specified how we ponder sense and work, we weren't able to cope with critical thinking about those differences. Individuals regressed to a previous way of thought about those differences that had roots in their ethnocentric and stereotypic ways of seeing the world and others. (Matsumoto et al., 2005)

If an individual cannot regulate his or her emotions, he/she faces many problems in intercultural interactions and it is not important how much linguistic or cultural knowledge or skill that person has had. To reach transcultural adaptation, one should continuously update his or her world attitude or take into account the miscellaneous transcultural alterations. Thus, it is a must to have emotional and mental adjustment to fix our emotional and affective reactions in a transcultural environment. It is a truism that transcultural context could lead to multifarious negative feelings and emotions in people such as contempt or frustration. Thus, it is indispensable to regulate our feelings and emotions to become interculturally competent persons in a multicultural world (Matsumoto, 2007).

Transcultural interactions may provoke various harmful affective consequences. For example, unfamiliar traditions may bring about anxiety; interaction challenges may lead to confusion; and biases may bring about scare, ire, or disdain. Therefore, the capacity to lower such harmful affective reactions should be important in the creation of transcultural ability (Matsumoto, 2009; Reid, 2010).

Appraisal theory allowed us to assess the impact of linguistic standardizing on affective responses that then influenced the consequence of the interaction. It was formulated that the affective impact of the transcultural interaction could be useful or harmful. (Wang et al., 2018). Fruitful transcultural communication could restrict the harmful emotions of people and this could occur by applying a shared means of communication since this shared means transfer a conducive affective reaction to fill the interaction gap (Vaara et al., 2005).

In an ethnographic study, Hinds et al. (2014) asserted that linguistic-based feelings changed the interactive behavior of more cognitively competent learners to refer to linguistic differences. Tenzer et al. (2014) clarified that learners tend to use their mother tongue when they are affectively manipulated and reveal signs of irritation and discomfort in using a foreign language.

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Hismanoglu (2011) investigated the effect of language proficiency, second culture experience, and formal teaching on the mastery of transcultural interaction in Turkish pupils. The findings disclosed that subjects with better linguistic ability provided more appropriate replies to interactive occasions compared to those with weaker linguistic ability.

Li and Campbell (2006) discovered that pupils in Asia preferred communicative learning and took part in interacting with their instructors. Also, the pupils asserted that they faced some unfamiliar hurdles in linguistic and cultural elements and also problems such as unfamiliar class arrangements based on academic regulations and insufficient help during the learning procedures.

Erfani (2014) examined Iran's teacher's attitudes toward cultural teaching in language classes. Most teachers emphasized that intercultural teaching and learning can lead to better understanding, better behavior, and better power of thinking. Tafaroji, et al. (2014) sought to cast light on the position of cultural elements in high schools in Iran. The results revealed that educators had conducive viewpoints to encompass cultural aspects in the instruction procedure.

Jalali and Sa'd (2013) examined the teachers' attitudes in Iran, too, and discovered that Persian English instructors were all aware of the importance of cultural instruction and its motivating effect. Rashidi and Soureshjani (2011) also found that instructing culturally laden passages had a significant effect on Persian pupils' motivation and their reading ability.

Ghorbani and Dowlatabadi (2023) found out that cultural-laden texts could improve the intercultural levels of English language teachers in all four parts of intercultural communicative competence, that is, knowledge, skills, awareness, and attitude. Also, in the same vein, Ghorbani and Dowlatabadi (2023) substantiated quantitatively that language, emotion, and culture could be the main macro-elements of intercultural communication. Other scientists such as Moloney and Harbon (2010), Matveev and Nelson (2004), Mol et al. (2005), and Giles (1977) emphasized the importance of linguistic mastery and ability in transcultural communication.

The aforementioned findings showed that many studies focused on the connection between linguistic and cultural elements and also the role of emotion in intercultural relations. However, the main gap is having a study that focuses on the role of linguistic need, affective need, and cultural needs at the same time in transcultural interaction. Thus, this study aimed to answer this big schism by responding to the beneath research questions:

1. Is language a major macro-need in the intercultural communication process?

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2. Is affective need a major macro-need in the intercultural communication process?
3. Is cultural need a major macro-need in the intercultural communication process?
4. Are linguistic, affective, and cultural needs related to one another?

Methodology

Participants

Iran's English language teachers were chosen as the population of this study and consequently, the English language teachers in Golestan province of Iran were selected as the target population. Factors such as availability, accessibility, and willingness of the participants were taken into account for the selection procedure. Thus, one hundred (100) English language teachers in Minoodasht City were chosen through a convenience sampling procedure. The age range of the subjects was between 22 and 40 and their academic degrees were BA and MA in English language teaching. It should be noted that 20 participants out of 100 took part in interview sessions willingly.

Research Design

This research applied a mixed methods research design as the researchers used both quantitative and qualitative procedures for the current study. The researchers utilized descriptive statistics and the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test to analyze the data collected from the Oxford placement test (OPT) and ICC questionnaires respectively for the quantitative analysis section. In the qualitative section, inductive content analysis was utilized to analyze the interview transcriptions to extract codes, categories, and themes.

Instrumentation

Miscellaneous instruments such as the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) which included 60 items and an ICC questionnaire developed by Kazykhankyzy (2019) comprising 52 items and a structured interview were utilized by researchers in this study. It should be stated that the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was .958 which revealed the questionnaire had high reliability (Kazykhankyzy, 2019). It was worth noting that lots of correspondence between the researchers of the study and the designer of the questionnaire, i.e., Kazykhankyzy (2019) were done to take the required oral permissions to use the questionnaire. The last instrument was a structured interview that was used for collecting qualitative data. The validity of the interview questions was checked through member checking and peer debriefing. The following are the interview questions for the current study:

1. What is the need for good intercultural communication, as a non-native speaker, when you interact with people from other cultures?

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2. Do you think language, emotion (e.g., attitude and motivation), and culture can be the main parts of intercultural communication? What is their role and position in an intercultural interaction? Order them based on your viewpoint and their importance.

3. Do you think there is a relationship between language, emotion, and culture when you are talking with people from other cultures?

Data Collection Procedure

To collect data for quantitative analysis, at first, the Oxford Placement test (OPT) which included 60 items was used to determine the teachers' level of general language proficiency. It should be noted that the reason for OPT was that the participants included both novice and experienced teachers and the researchers decided to assure about the homogeneity of the participants, so the OPT was run to check the proficiency level of the participants. Then, the ICC questionnaire developed by Kazykhankyzy (2019) was used by researchers to collect the prerequisite data to determine the intercultural communication level of the participants. ICC questionnaire questions addressed four dimensions, i.e., attitude, skill, knowledge, and awareness components of ICC. The questionnaire consisted of 52 items based on a five-point Likert scale. The options corresponding to the items and point responses were edited as follows 5=totally agree; 4 =agree; 3=undecided; 2=disagree; 1=totally disagree. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was .958 which revealed the questionnaire had high reliability (Kazykhankyzy, 2019).

Researchers needed to make sure about the ICC level of the teachers before holding the interview session, therefore, the teachers needed instruction to improve their ICC level. It should be noted that the instruction process lasted for 20 hours in ten sessions and each session lasted two hours. The researchers taught participants the main points of intercultural studies such as intercultural theories, intercultural models, and their relation with English language teaching. To collect data for qualitative analysis, 20 participants took part in the structured interview willingly to find the role of language, emotion, and culture in intercultural communications. The researchers formulated three interview questions for the current study. The interview session lasted thirty minutes and all the recorded answers were transcribed by the researchers. Based on the answers collected from a structured interview, the researchers found in what order language, emotion and culture should be put. Because of the COVID-19 period, it was worth mentioning that the interview questions were sent through Skype and WhatsApp soft wares to participants and then they answered the questions orally and sent them back to the researchers.

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Data Analysis

In the quantitative section, to analyze the data collected from OPT, the researchers used descriptive statistics to calculate the mean and standard deviation along with the minimum and maximum scores of OPT to find the language proficiency level of the participants. Then, the ICC questionnaire was distributed among the participants to fill out before and after instruction and the researchers used the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, because the data weren't normally distributed, to find the intercultural communication level of the participants. In the qualitative section, to analyze the interview transcriptions, the researchers used inductive content analysis. By using open coding and secondary coding processes, all the collected data from the interview session were coded and tabulated. It should be noted that the researchers used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis model to extract related themes. To ensure the reliability of the data, the researchers used inter-coder reliability, that is, the researchers asked another person to code the same texts of the transcript. The validity and credibility of the study were checked by member checking and peer debriefing. Some of the participants and researchers were asked to check the answers to the interview questions to confirm the answers as valid and credible. Finally, based on the data collected from the questionnaire and interview, the role and order of language, emotion, and culture in intercultural communication were elaborated.

Results

Quantitative Results

The following part coped with the Oxford placement test findings quantitatively. By using descriptive statistics, the participants' English language ability was pinpointed. The following table represents the final round of quantitative analysis.

Table 1

Descriptive Result for OPT

options	N	Min	Max	M	SD
Score	100	42.0	46.0	44.410	.8177

Table 1 revealed that the range of participants' numbers was forty-two and forty-six. The mean amount equaled 44.41 (M=44.41) which signified the participants' linguistic ability was beyond the intermediate level. After pinpointing that participants were all at the same level of ability, the authors sought to pinpoint the intercultural level of the participants by applying an ICC questionnaire. By holding instruction sessions, the authors distributed

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the questionnaire before and after the instruction period and the final results revealed that the participants enjoyed a low level of ICC before instruction and a high level of ICC after instruction and this meant that instruction had a fruitful impact on the ICC level of the participants. The following table shows the results of the ICC analysis.

Table 2
Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Results

	Skill	Attitude	Awareness	Knowledge
Z	-8.684[b]	-8.688[b]	-8.685[b]	-8.688[b]
p	.000	.000	.000	.000

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test findings disclosed that there existed a significant difference among the subjects regarding their ICC level before and after instruction and this meant that instruction could bring about conducive change in the ICC level of individuals.

Qualitative Results

This section deals with the inductive content analysis of the interview questions. Twenty participants out of 100 took part in the interview section willingly. The following interview questions were used to answer the first three research questions.

1. What is the need for good intercultural communication, as a non-native speaker, when you interact with people from other cultures?

2. Do you think language, emotion (e.g., attitude and motivation), and culture can be the main parts of intercultural communication? What are their role and position in an intercultural interaction? Order them based on your viewpoint and their importance.

The researchers formulated the interview questions in a way that extracted the direct and related responses from the participants. As all the participants were non-native speakers of English, they were asked to think and express what their needs could be in an intercultural situation. In addition, the second interview question made the matter more limited by asking about the role and position of language, emotion, and culture in ICC based on the participants' viewpoints. The researchers used descriptive and in vivo codes along with thematic analysis to extract codes and themes. The following table (Table 3) shows the codes and themes for the first interview question.

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Table 3
Codes and Themes for Interview Question 1

Codes	Frequency	Themes
Body language	18	Language
Understandable conversation	20	
Cultural knowledge	17	Culture
Positive attitude	12	
Motivation	12	
Respect	12	emotion
Trust	10	
Lack of judgment	10	

The first interview question asked the participant's views on the need for good intercultural relations. The above-mentioned in vivo and descriptive codes and themes were extracted from twenty participants' answers. The participants asserted that these codes and themes were the needs of any intercultural interactions. Among these codes, body language and understandable conversation were the most frequent answers respectively, that is, 18 participants pointed out body language and 20 participants pointed out understandable conversation as key codes of language. Eighteen participants asserted that body language was important in intercultural communication and it included gestures, eye contact, hand movement, and finger-pointing. Eighteen participants said that these aspects of body language could cause cultural and emotional misunderstanding as they were different from culture to culture. The next code was understandable conversation as the most frequent answer (N=20) and these twenty participants asserted that language and mastery over language skills were the most important needs of intercultural communication. Participants believed that in intercultural interactions, individuals should avoid complex words, structures, slang, and idioms to have effective communication. Also, they should speak slowly, keep the conversation simple, and at the same time be active listeners. In aggregate, the theme "language" which included body language and understandable conversation is classified as the most important need of the ICC.

The next code was cultural knowledge which was the most frequent answer given to this interview question (17 participants mentioned cultural knowledge as their answer). It came under the theme of "culture". Seventeen Participants asserted that cultural knowledge is another important aspect of intercultural communication because it helps them to avoid cultural misunderstanding and conflicts as they can recognize the social rules and

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cultural customs. It also helps them accept and adapt to cultural differences easily and reach a cultural understanding. The theme "Culture" is classified as the second most important need of ICC. Positive attitude, motivation, and respect were among the most frequent codes and answers since 12 participants mentioned them in their given answers. Ten participants mentioned trust and lack of judgment as their answers. Participants expressed that in intercultural communication, individuals had to observe mutual trust and respect (to individuals and cultures). They had to be motivated based on their behavior and personality (personal) traits whether they were introverts or extroverts. They had to keep a positive attitude and tried to be non-judgmental during the interaction. Positive attitude, motivation, respect, trust, and lack of judgment were related to the theme "emotion". Emotion was categorized as the third most important need of ICC.

Table 4

Themes and Codes for Interview Question 2

Codes	Frequency	Themes
Language	12	Language
Culture	5	Culture
Emotion	3	Emotion

The second interview question examined the role, position, and order of language, emotion, and culture as the main parts of the ICC. The analysis of the answers shows that all participants expressed their agreement that language, emotion, and culture are the main needs and macro-elements of intercultural communications. However, the participants expressed miscellaneous viewpoints about the importance and order of these macro-elements in an intercultural interaction by expressing different views. For example, one of them stated that "we cannot separate emotion and culture from language. They all started at the beginning of any communication simultaneously". The other answer was that "language is the means to express our feelings and emotions in a given cultural context and they are not separable. It is important to understand the interlocutor's emotions. It is mentioned that it is through language that we express our emotions and reach a level of cultural affinity. Language can act as a speaker's cultural identity and as a means to disclose our emotions and at the same time culture constrains our emotions. Language and culture are two sides of the same coin and emotion acts as a mediator between them." Such statements could

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be interpreted in this way language, culture, and emotion are all important elements of ICC among which language is much more important than the other two elements as language influences both culture and emotion. Based on the extracted codes from the interview answers, 12 participants chose "language" as the most important need of intercultural communication or ICC. Five participants chose "culture" as the most important need of the ICC and three participants chose "emotion" as the most important need of the ICC. This means that twelve participants out of twenty participants agreed that language is the first macro-element that we need in our intercultural communication to have a good connection with others. Here, language includes body language, language skills, and conversational skills. These 12 participants maintained that language is much more important than the other two needs, that is, culture and emotion.

Five participants out of twenty participants agreed that culture includes cultural knowledge and social rules. is the most important macro-element that we need to have a good intercultural relationship. These five participants maintained that culture is much more important than language and emotion and it should be paid attention to first of all in any intercultural communication. Only three participants had the idea that emotion is much more important than language and culture in intercultural relations and they maintained that emotion should be paid attention to first of all. Based on these results and explanations, these macro-elements (macro-needs) could be categorized in the following order based on their importance from the participants' viewpoints. Based on the results of analyses, three types of order are presented:

1. **Language, culture, emotion:** By considering participants' statements such as "language, emotion, and culture are inseparable or language is a channel for expressing emotions", it can be concluded that 12 participants stated that language is the most critical need of ICC and emotion is the least essential need which acts as a mediator between language and culture. Twelve participants agreed that in any intercultural communication, the first thing we had to take into account was language. The second one is culture and the last one is emotion. This is the first suggested order based on the participants' viewpoints. Based on this order what we needed most in our intercultural relations is to consider our interlocutors' language (linguistic need) first.

2. **Culture, language, emotion:** statements of the participants such as "language and culture are two sides of the same coin" substantiated that five participants stated that culture is the most critical need of ICC and emotion is a mediator and the least important need. That is, this second the order revealed that five participants agreed that culture is the first element in any

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intercultural communication that had to be taken into account. Then they agreed that after culture, language is the most crucial element of ICC and the last thing we need in our intercultural communication is emotion. Based on this order what we needed most in our intercultural relations is to consider our interlocutors' culture (cultural need) first.

3. **Emotion, language, culture:** statements such as "attitude and emotion is the most important element in intercultural communication" showed that three participants mentioned that emotion is the most critical need of ICC and culture is the least important need. Language is a means to express emotions such as empathy, sympathy, love, and anger. This third order disclosed that three participants agreed that emotion is the first element of ICC that had to be taken into account. The next one was language and the last one was culture. Based on this order what we need most in our intercultural relations is to consider our interlocutors' emotions (affective need) first.

Based on the above-mentioned qualitative analysis of the data, the researchers concluded that language, culture, and emotion are the main macro-elements of the ICC which could have different order and importance in different intercultural communications and situations. The relationship between language, emotion, and culture is another important matter which is the focus of research question four. To answer this question, the following interview question was formulated (the third interview question). The following interview question asked the participants to express directly their viewpoints about the existence of a relationship among language, culture, and emotion.

3. Do you think there is a relationship between Language, Emotion, and Culture when you are talking with people from other cultures?

Table 5

Codes and Themes for Interview Question 3

Codes	Frequency	Themes
Interrelated	15	Language
Integrated/connected	2	
Intertwined	1	Culture
Strong bond	1	
Causal relation	10	Emotion

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Table 5 shows that the participants used words such as "interrelated, closely connected, strong bond, etc." in their answers. All these words were extracted and collected as codes in Table 5. It could be construed from the answers that participants believed that it was impossible to separate these macro-elements as there was a strong relationship among them and could influence each other. Based on the participants' answers, another thing that could be construed is that the weight of this relationship varies from one culture to another culture according to the topic and content of intercultural communication. In general, the participants asserted that it is meaningless to talk about language without considering emotion or culture in intercultural communication. The participants maintained that these macro-elements help to the existence of each other in any intercultural communication as there exists a strong relation among them. Based on the participants' viewpoints, these macro-elements are activated simultaneously in intercultural communication but the interlocutors' traits and the situation in which the communication happens could influence which macro-element is more important. Thus, there is a strong relationship between language, emotion, and culture in intercultural communications.

Discussion

This study investigated the position of linguistic, affective, and cultural elements in ICC in Iran's context. 100 teachers were selected through convenience sampling and their linguistic ability and intercultural levels were determined by using the Oxford placement test and ICC questionnaire. To explicate more about the findings and results, the researchers presented a brief discussion of the findings below.

Hismanoglu (2011) proved that linguistic proficiency was an important tool for communication, and the teaching process was useful in reinforcing the ICC level. This study also substantiated that linguistic element was the most important macro-need of intercultural interaction and instruction was an important tool in increasing ICC levels. Byram (1997), Garrido and Alvarez (2006), Moloney and Harbon (2010), Panocova (2020), Malakloluntu and Selan (2011), Matveev and Nelson (2004), Mol et al., (2005) and Giles (1977) were a few scientists who emphasized the importance of linguistic elements in intercultural communication that supported the findings of this study. The present research also confirmed that language is the most important macro-element in intercultural studies.

Gudykunst (2004) also proved that there was a connection among linguistic, cultural, and affective elements that also supported this study's findings. The current study proved that linguistic need, affective need, and cultural need are the major macro-needs of intercultural communication

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among which emotion acts as a mediator. Thus, both studies found that there existed a connection between linguistic, cultural, and affective elements. Liddicoat et al. (2003) and Wei (2005) asserted that linguistic and cultural factors were interrelated and that linguistic factors were carrying the cultural element. The current research substantiated that linguistic and cultural needs were the most vital needs in transcultural communication, and that affective need worked as a mediating variable between linguistic and cultural elements. It should be noted that language, emotion, and culture are interrelated, too.

Vaara et al. (2005) stated that Fruitful transcultural communication could restrict the harmful emotions of people and this could occur by applying a shared means of communication since this shared means transfer a conducive affective reaction to fill the interaction gap. The present research evinced that linguistic elements had a conducive effect on affective elements, causing emotion to act as a mediating variable between linguistic needs and cultural needs. Tenzer and Pudelko (2015) asserted that the link between linguistic, affective, and cultural needs was the missing link in intercultural studies which corroborated the results of the present research as this study examined the position and importance of linguistic need, cultural needs, and affective need in intercultural communication simultaneously. Matsumoto (2007, 2009), and Wang et al. (2018) accentuated that emotion was important for having successful cross-cultural communication which corroborated this study's finding as this study substantiated that emotion was one of the macro-elements of ICC.

Li et al. (2004) and Liddicoat (2008) proved that linguistic and cultural elements were greatly connected and the present research substantiated that there is a powerful connection between language, culture, and emotion, and that language affects culture. Lauring (2011), Zhang (2015), and Jie (2010) emphasized that culture and social features were important for intercultural relations and the current study also emphasized that culture is the second important macro-need of intercultural communication.

Hinds et al. (2014) and Tenzer et al. (2014) proved that emotions could be the product of language and the current study also showed that language can have a direct impact on emotions. Li and Campbell (2006) showed that linguistic and cultural problems could cause difficulty in intercultural relations which shows the influence of language and culture on intercultural communication. The current study confirmed that language and culture are the main macro-needs of intercultural communication, having a direct impact on intercultural relations.

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Conclusion and Implications

Discovering the importance of linguistic, affective, and cultural needs in intercultural studies was a missing link. The results and findings of this study evinced that linguistic, affective, and cultural needs are the major macro-needs of intercultural communication and linguistic needs are the most vital need for intercultural communication and then cultural and affective needs. Affective need worked as a mediator that helped linguistic elements influence cultural elements. Also, it was found that all these three needs, that is, language, emotion, and culture are interrelated and there exists a strong relationship among them. A wide variety of implications can be inferred from the above-mentioned results and discussion. First, the findings of the current study can be of great help to language teachers since the findings enlighten the language teachers to pay more attention to the role of language in intercultural and cultural topics and avoid focusing only on cultural aspects of textbook contents. Second, the findings help the cultural psychologist to examine the roots of their clients' problems linguistically, and culturally and pinpoint the source of their problems specifically. Third, the findings help intercultural experts convince curriculum developers and textbook writers to include more intercultural content while compiling their textbooks. Finally, the findings assist businessmen and politicians in taking into account language, culture, and emotional factors in their intercultural trades and meetings respectively.

This study is valuable and important for language educators, curriculum designers, and textbook writers since this study shows that instruction is an indispensable device in reinforcing the ICC capacity of people. Language teachers, textbook writers, and curriculum developers can create courses, lesson plans, and books that concentrate on the significance of linguistic, cultural, and affective needs in intercultural communications and also provide drills and tasks to strengthen the ICC level in their pupils. Researchers need to work on finding the best ways of teaching language, emotion, and culture in English language classrooms in national and international milieus. Finding how to assess language, emotion, and culture in an intercultural encounter is another important suggestion that needs more attention. Last but not least, teachers should focus on teaching intercultural communication in their classes both individually, and chorally, that is, they should perform individual teaching and team teaching processes.

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