
Relationship between Intercultural Communicative Competence and L2 Learning: Iranian EFL Learners' Motivation and Achievement

Mahdi Rezaei

English Department, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran

Hadi Salehi (Corresponding author)

English Department, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran

Email: hadisalehi1358@yahoo.com

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Abstract

This study aimed to scrutinize the measurement of ICC and then investigate the relationship between Iranian L2 learners and their L2 learning motivation, and achievement on the one hand, and the difference between ICC and motivation of EFL learners, on the other. To do this, the participants included 60 B.A. Translation and 60 B.A. non-Translation students in universities in Iran. A test battery including the final version of the ICC questionnaire and an L2-learning motivation questionnaire adapted from Gardner's attitude/motivation test battery was then administered to a random selection of both English and non-English students. The correlation results showed that there was not a significant relationship between L2 learners' ICC and L2-learning motivation. In the meantime, t-test results depicted that there was not a significant difference between English and non-English Iranian EFL learners. The correlations results showed that there was a significant relationship between ICC and achievement of English students. This study can convince the learners to become aware of the significance of ICC and the effect of teaching English on developing this competence.

Keywords: Intercultural Communicative Competence, Motivation, Achievement

1. Introduction

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is the ability to encode and decode meanings that correspond to the meaning held in another communicator's repository (Beamer, 1992). In order to learn, to know, and to function in society, communication is essential and plays a crucial role in society. However, individuals may consciously or unconsciously prevent situations and positions where communication is required.

As Chen and Starosta (2005) accentuated, five trends have pushed human society into a globally connected network and strongly demand the ability to communicate competently in intercultural context in order to produce a successful life in the 21st century. The five trends involve the development of new communication and transportation technologies, the global inter-reliance on economy, the prevalent movement of populations around the world, the rapid development of multiculturalism, and the de-emphasis of nation-state.

These globalization trends have made the world more interdependent and interconnected, which impacts almost every aspect of human society on personal, interpersonal, group, and organizational levels. Thus, scholars in various disciplines have started to explore how to help people develop a global mindset through the enhancement of intercultural communication competence by extending and expanding the previous research on communication competence. It is supposed that only through intercultural communication competence can people of differing cultures attain their goals effectively and appropriately in the process of intercultural interaction (Chen & Starosta, 1996).

Moreover, the notion of ICC seems to be conceptually connected to the major individual differences (i.e., characteristics or traits in respect of which individuals may be shown to differ from each other) among which the variable of L2 motivation stands out. Previous research has indicated that L2 motivation can significantly affect language learning success and, in some cases, can prevail over the effect of language aptitude (i.e. a specific talent for learning foreign languages which exhibits considerable variation between learners) (Dornyei, 2005; Dornyei & Skehan, 2003).

Motivation provides the early momentum for L2 learning and the subsequent mainspring for the learner's persistence with the long and often tiresome learning process. Gardner and Lambert (1959), Gardner and Lambert (1972) discussed that learners' understanding of other cultures and desire to be in some sense nearer to speakers of an L2 (in their terminology, *integrative* motivation) are considered the best grounds of achievement and success in language learning. Dornyei and Csizer's (1998) research granted further evidence that competency to approach and understand a target language culture is a requisite variable with certain links to language-learning motivation. Nevertheless, Byram (2008) and Byram and Feng (2005) dispute that the assumption of a causal relationship between language learning or motivation and understanding of and attitudes toward other and foreign cultures has been thriftily researched and thus requires much more research.

Communication competence in general has been characterized as communication behavior that is both effective and pertinent (Spitzberg & Cupach 1984). A competent communicator is effective in one's ability to attain one's goals, and suitable in one's ability to exhibit behavior that is accepted as well as expected in a given situation. Needless to say, expected and accepted behavior depends on cultural/relational context, and therefore these factors have to be taken into consideration when extending this definition of communication competence to intercultural contexts.

The findings of this research can underline ICC as a key issue to success in intercultural communication, generally, L2 learning, particularly. In this regard, there is already a strong argument going on in the field that an L2 learner who does not learn the L2 culture runs the risk of "becoming a fluent fool" (Bennett et al. 2003, p. 237). A *fluent fool* L2 learner speaks an L2 well but is not acquainted with the values, beliefs, and cultural dimensions which constitute the heart of language. Given that ICC is a key component of communication and language-learning success in today's global village (Kim & Hubbard, 2007), it is evenly important to research how its development is influenced (or conditioned) by different societal forces and individual characteristics.

The present study examined the problem of the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and motivation and achievement of Iranian EFL learners. This quantitative study established whether a significant relationship existed between ICC, motivation and achievement of Iranian EFL learners.

2. Theoretical Framework

Communicative competence comprises of two words. The combination of competence and communicative. Competence is the most controversial word in the field of applied linguistic. It is associated with Chomsky who drew what has been today viewed as a classic distinction between competence (the knowledge of the speaker of the language) and the performance (the actual use of language in real life situation).

When Chomsky asserted the notion of competence and performance, disapproval of this view was stated by many advocates of communicative approach in applied linguistic (e.g. Savignon, 1972) at the idea of using the concept of idealized, purely linguistic competence as a theoretical ground of methodology for learning, teaching and testing language. They discovered different to Chomsky's concept of competence in Hymes' communicative competence. "Communicative not only as an inherent grammatical competence but also as the ability to utilize grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situation" (Hyme, 1972). So bringing the sociolinguistic view into Chomsky's linguistic view of competence.

Accordingly, the term communicative competence was coined by Hymes (1972), who described it as the knowledge of both rules of grammar and rules of language use suitable to a given context. His work clearly illustrated a shift of emphasis among linguists, away from the study of language as a system in isolation, a focus seen in the work of Chomsky (1965), towards the study of language as communication. Hymess' (1972) conceptualization of communicative competence has been further expanded by researchers such as Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), Bachman (1990) and Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), who tried to define the specific components of the construct of communicative competence.

The widely cited model by Canale and Swain (1980), later developed by Canale (1983), comprises of four competencies under the heading of communicative competence: grammatical competence (i.e. knowledge of the language code); sociolinguistic competence (i.e. knowledge of the sociocultural rules of use in a particular context); strategic competence (i.e. knowledge of how to use communication strategies to handle breakdowns in communication) and discourse competence (i.e. knowledge of achieving coherence and cohesion in a spoken or written text). Pragmatic competence is essentially included in this model under sociolinguistic competence, which Canale and Swain (1980, p.30) explained as 'sociocultural rules of use'.

However, it was not until Bachman that pragmatic competence came to be regarded as one of the main components of communicative competence.

Bachman's (1990) model of communicative language ability included three components, namely language competence, strategic competence and physiological mechanisms. Language competence includes two further components: organizational and pragmatic competence. On the one hand, organizational competence consists of grammatical and textual competence, thereby paralleling Canale's (1983) discourse competence. On the other hand, pragmatic competence consists of illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence, the former referring to knowledge of speech acts and language functions and the latter referring to the knowledge of how to use language functions appropriately in a given context. This distinction between these two sub-competencies echoes Leech's (1983, pp.10-11) and Thomas's (1983, p.99) division of pragmatics into *pragmalinguistics*, which has been defined as 'the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions', and *sociopragmatics*, which has been defined as 'the sociological interface of pragmatics'. Apart from language competence, the model also includes strategic competence and physiological mechanisms. The former refers to the mental capacity to implement language competence appropriately in the situation in which communication takes place, whereas the latter refers to the neurological and psychological processes that are involved in language use. The most notable advance on Canale's (1983) model is that Bachman's (1990) model identifies pragmatic competence as a main component of the construct of communicative competence that is coordinated with grammatical and textual competence rather than being subordinated to it and interacting with the organizational competence in many ways (Kasper, 1997). Ever since then, the importance of this competence has been maintained as, for example, in the pedagogically motivated model of communicative competence proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995).

An emerging idea about communicative language teaching has been that, even if contextualized and linguistically adjusted, communication may not be sufficient unless it is accompanied by multidimensional cultural awareness supposed to lead to a relationship of acceptance where self and Other are trying to negotiate a cultural platform satisfactory to all parties involved (Guilherme, 2000). Such ideas engendered the notion of intercultural communicative competence, i.e. the knowledge, motivation and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures (Wiseman, 2002, p. 208).

Hypothesizing that communicative competence cannot be attained without an orientation towards the other's culture, Akalin (2004) analyzed the textbooks used in Turkey to teach English. Based on her findings, she suggests that textbooks for especially young learners should firstly be predicated on elements from Turkish and even local culture and move slowly to the target culture so that students would not feel inhibited as we go from simple/known to more complex/unknown in any educational process.

The notion of 'intercultural communicative competence' in foreign-language education indicates postmodernist views on identity. Byram and Zarate (1997) explain an intercultural competent person as someone who can cross borders and can mediate between two or more cultural identities. The 'intercultural speaker' is not a cosmopolitan being who floats over cultures, much like tourists tend to do. Rather, he or she is carried out to turning intercultural encounters into intercultural relationships. He or she is not satisfied with a view from the outside, with marveling at differences and at what seems exotic and intriguing about another culture. An intercultural speaker is determined to understand, to gain an inside view of the other person's culture, and at the same time to contribute to the other person's understanding of his or her own culture from an insider's point of view.

With regard to the concept of ICC, Byram (1997) points out that "when persons from different languages and/or countries interact socially, they bring to the situation their knowledge about their own country and that of the others" (pp. 32-33). In addition to, Byram (1997) explained that "part of the success of such interaction will depend on the establishing and maintenance of human relationships, something which depends on attitudinal factors" (pp. 32-33). Furthermore, it should be indicated that aspects, knowledge, and attitude are affected by the processes of intercultural communication, that is, the skills of interpretation and constructing ties between aspects of the two cultures and the skills of discovery and interaction.

In theory, ICC is related to intellectual tolerance, human understanding, and adaptability which are generally categorized as educational goals around the world (Zhao, 2002). L2 researchers have recently demonstrated growing interest in the application of social-cultural theories of mind, learning, and education. In theory, more attention is dedicated to language-culture reciprocity, in the sense that language puts cultural reality into words and is dynamically shaped by culture (Kramsch, 1998). This has in turn led to increased emphasis being put on teaching language for ICC (Byram, 2008; Byram & Feng, 2005; Byram & Zarate, 1997; East, 2012). According to Kiet Ho (2009), it is essential for modern L2 teaching and learning to incorporate ICC in the language learning process and to recognize the impossibility of separating language and culture from each other. Therefore, language teachers should plan pedagogical tasks and activities that can promote L2 learners' ICC and prepare them to meet the requirement of effectively acting in a global village (Ortiz & Moore, 2000).

Knowledge contains various areas that researchers have explored. Vulpe et al. (2003) have expanded the "Profile of The Interculturally Effective Person" which consists of nine characteristics and two of them list knowledge, i.e. knowledge of the host country and culture as well as self- knowledge. Also one in three pillars of Matveev's model of intercultural competence (2004, p.106) is *cultural knowledge* about the self- and other cultures. The reason for that is that "team members must acknowledge differences in communication and interaction styles of managers from different cultures, show flexibility in resolving communication misunderstandings, and feel comfortable when communicating with foreign nationals" (Ibid). Knowledge produces awareness to cultural differences, communication styles, the self-concept etc. Therefore, it can be seen as a combined building block of knowledge and awareness (see Jokikokko, 2005, p.94).

In second or foreign language research and education, learners' development of ICC, or the communicative proficiency to interact appropriately with people from other cultures (i.e. to understand and negotiate both linguistic and cultural differences), is of prime importance (Kurt, Ersin, & Kaslioglu, 2009; Byram & Feng, 2005; Sebnem, et al, 2009; Sercu, 2002). It is now argued that navigating intercultural differences in an ever-shrinking world requires more than the accumulation of purely linguistic facts and requires competence in negotiating differences appropriately using language, or relating effectively to *otherness* (Byram, 1997; East, 2012). Additionally, the notion of ICC seems to be conceptually linked to the major *individual-differences* (i.e. characteristics or traits in respect of which individuals may be shown to differ from each other) variable of L2 motivation. Previous research has shown that L2 motivation can significantly affect language learning success and, in some cases, can override the effect of language aptitude (i.e. a specific talent for learning foreign languages which exhibits considerable variation between learners) (Doˆrnyei, 2005; Doˆrnyei & Skehan, 2003). Motivation provides the initial impetus for L2 learning and the subsequent driving force for the learner's perseverance with the long and often tedious learning process.

According to Gardner and Lambert (1959), Gardner and Lambert (1972) argued that learners' understanding of other cultures and desire to be in some sense closer to speakers of an L2 (in their terminology, *integrative* motivation) are considered the best basis for achievement and success in language learning. Doˆrnyei and Csizer's (1998) research yields further evidence that competency to approach and understand a target language culture is an important variable with certain links to language-learning motivation. Nonetheless, Byram (2008) and Byram and Feng (2005) argue that the assumption of a causal relationship between language learning or motivation and understanding of and attitudes toward other and foreign cultures has been sparingly researched and thus needs much more research. Part and parcel of this research should come from language-learning contexts where two spatially (and perhaps politically) segregated cultures come into contact and where L2 learners are expected to be differentially predisposed to communicate with the target language culture and are, as a result, differently competent or motivated to use or learn the foreign language. The context of this study characterizes such a geo-political, intercultural boundary between post-revolutionary Iran and the English-speaking countries (especially the US), where Iranian L2 learners of English are the focal point of attention.

The findings of this line of research can underscore ICC as a key to success in intercultural communication, in general, and L2 learning, in particular. In this regard, there is already a strong argument going on in the field that an L2 learner who does not learn the L2 culture runs the risk of "becoming a fluent fool" (Bennett et al, 2003, p. 237). A *fluent fool* L2 learner speaks an L2 well but is not acquainted with the values, beliefs, and cultural dimensions which constitute the heart of language. Given that ICC is a key component of communication and language-learning success in today's global village (Kim & Hubbard, 2007), it is equally important to research how its development is influenced (or conditioned) by different societal forces and individual characteristics.

3. The Case Study

As above mentioned, this study investigated the relationship between intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and motivation and achievement of Iranian EFL learners. Moreover, the study scrutinized any association between Iranian L2 learner's gender and motivation and their achievement. Data were analyzed in order to gain an insight into the following research questions:

- 1) Is there any significant relationship between intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and motivation of Iranian English major EFL students?
- 2) Is there any significant relationship between ICC and motivation of Iranian non-English major EFL students?
- 3) Is there any significant difference between the relationship of ICC and motivation of Iranian English major and non-English major EFL students?
- 4) Is there any significant relationship between ICC and achievement of Iranian English major EFL students?

4. Method

In this study, the convenience sampling method was used to select the participants. The total number of participants was 120 university students including English translation major students and non-English major students who enrolled full-time (12 or more credit hours) at the university in the center of Iran.

The sample included 60 participants' university students studying English and 60 participants' non-English major. The participants ranged in age from 20 to 37, including both sexes (male and female). All of the participants had lived in Iran and they had not been or traveled abroad. There were no exposures for them and all of them were born and grew up in their native families in Iran.

5. Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedure

All instruments were coded in the form of Likert-type scales and utilized multiple-choice questions with 4-point variation for the intercultural communicative competence questionnaire (ICCQ), 1 = strongly disagree and 4 = strongly agree and 6-point variation for the Motivation questionnaire, 1 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree. For those whose non-English major,

studied English at different institutions nearly high proficiency level of English and at university and at high school. In a way that they were familiar with English.

The ICCQ included 25 questions and was adapted from Arasaratnam's (2009) instrument, Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven's (2000) MPQ, which consists of five personality factors, for evaluating cultural empathy to identify the feelings, thought and behavior of individuals from different cultural backgrounds, open-mindedness to assesses people's capacity to be open when they come across with people from outside of their own cultural group and who may have different values and norms, social initiative in order to signify people's tendency to get social situations actively and to take initiative, emotional stability that is to say that the degree to which individual trend to stay calm in stressful situations and flexibility that is associated with individual's ability to regulate their behavior to new situations.

The second instrument was a motivation questionnaire which included 37 questions and was adapted from Attitude/Motivations Test Battery (AMTB) of Gardner's (2004) for evaluating individual's motivation toward learning English as a foreign language. It is kind of questionnaire for using secondary school and university students studying English as a foreign language.

The questionnaires were written and translated in a simple English and Persian in a way that all of the participants were able to read and understand without any ambiguity. After translated questionnaires, the researcher checked the reliability of the questionnaires in order to find out any potential problem with the questionnaires that could arise during data collection. The researcher used Cronbach's alpha to obtain reliability of the questionnaires. The reliability statistics calculated through Cronbach's alpha was 0.7. It was shown that the questionnaire is reliable.

There were two questionnaires (ICCQ, motivation questionnaire) for both English and non-English EFL students. Two of the questionnaires were written in English for English EFL students and the same translation of those questionnaire was written in Persian form for non-English students. In order to check the reliability of the translated questionnaires the researcher checked the reliability of them after translation and utilized them to a large sample of study.

The questionnaires were pilot tested with a random sample of 20 EFL university students in order to find any potential problems with the questionnaires that could arise during data collection, and the reliability calculated through Cronbach's alpha was 0.7. This percentage ascertained that the reliability of the questionnaire was acceptable, and it is ready to conduct for a large sample of the study. The questionnaires encompassed the following sections:

Section 1:

In the first part of the questionnaire, the participants' demographic information was attained, such as age, gender, and field of study.

Section 2:

In the second part of the questionnaire the participants' beliefs about culture and self-report culture was explored. In this part they had to answer several questions according to their beliefs and their cultural background. This part comprised of 4-point variation for the ICCQ and 6-point variation for the Motivation Questionnaire.

The study was piloted in order to achieve a higher level of internal reliability and find out any types of problems with the questionnaires during the investigation. The pilot study was administered with 20 EFL university students to confirm the validity and the reliability of the instrument using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability statistics calculated through Cronbach's alpha was 0.7 among 20 EFL university students. The result of the pilot study showed the acceptable reliability of the questionnaire.

The data obtained through the questionnaires were coded for statistical analysis to find out the answer to the research questions. All of the data were computed by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Edition 22). The trends for the students' intercultural communicative competence were summarized and explained using descriptive statistics.

First a measure to assess the learners' ICC developed by using Arasaratnam's (2009) instrument, Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven's (2000) MPQ, and Mirzaei and Forouzandeh's (2013) questionnaire. The new measure was piloted to determine its validity.

In addition, the L2-learning motivation questionnaire adapted from Gardner's attitude/motivation test battery used to determine students' level of motivation. Then, the researcher selected the participants randomly from both English and non-English major university students. The participants, 60 English major and 60 non-English major, filled out the ICC questionnaire first. Following that, they also answered to the items on the motivation questionnaire. For English major students, their GPA's used to determine their achievement.

After collecting the data, the Chi square test was used to determine the significance of the relationships. Also, a t-test was run to determine whether there is a significant difference between English and non-English major students' motivation and ICC.

6. Results

As a reminder, the main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and L2 learning. The study examined diverse components pertinent to students' ICC and motivation and achievement. The results depict the analysis of the data which sprang from the Iranian university students to whom the survey on a Likert-type scale was administered.

7. Relationship between ICC and Motivation of English EFL Learners

The statistical results of this part were analyzed using the Pearson correlation process to determine whether there was a reciprocal and mutual relationship between the measures of ICC and motivation of English EFL learners.

Frist, descriptive statistics were computed for ICC and motivation of the English EFL learners. Second, to look at the relationship between the L2 learners' ICC and L2 learning of motivation the Pearson correlation was computed. The results of the descriptive statistics are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistic for ICC and motivation of EFL students

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewedness	Kurtosis
ICC	60	65	87	73	4.857	0.553	2.55
Motivation	60	105	203	158.80	20.164	-0.151	0.138

As it is shown in the above table, in respect to the ICC scores ($M = 73$ and $SD = 4.857$) the mean scores was not similar to the motivation score. As to the motivation ($M = 158.164$ and $SD = 20.164$) the mean score was larger than the ICC mean score. The skewedness and kurtosis values indicated that the normality assumptions were met.

Then, the Pearson correlation was used to explore the relationship between the EFL students' ICC and L2-learning motivation. Initial analyses were performed to make sure there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity. Table 2 showed the results of the correlation for ICC and L2 motivation scores.

Table 2. The Relationship between ICC and L2 motivation of English EFL learners

	L2 motivation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
ICC	-.102	.269	120

8. Relationship between ICC and Motivation of Non-English EFL Learners

In order to reach the answer of relationship between ICC and Motivation of non-English EFL learners, the researcher used the Pearson correlation to find out whether there was a relationship between ICC and motivation of non-English EFL learners.

Frist, descriptive statistics were computed for ICC and motivation of the non-English EFL learners. Second, to look at the relationship between the L2 learners' ICC and L2 learning of motivation the Pearson correlation was computed. The results of the descriptive statistics are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistic of ICC and motivation of non-English EFL learners

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewedness	Kurtosis
ICC	60	57	90	72.90	6.68	.335	.323
Motivation	60	117	210	160.20	17.54	-.020	.876

As it is shown in the above table, in respect to the ICC scores ($M = 72.90$ and $SD = 6.68$) the mean scores were not similar to the motivation scores. As to the motivation ($M = 160.20$ and $SD = 17.54$) the mean score was larger than the ICC mean score. The skewedness and kurtosis values indicated that the normality assumptions were met.

Then, a Pearson correlation was used to explore the relationship between the non-English EFL students' ICC and L2-learning motivation. Initial analyses were performed to make sure there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity. Table 4 shows the results of the correlation for ICC and L2 motivation scores.

Table 4 The Relationship between ICC and L2 motivation of Iranian non-English EFL learners

	L2 motivation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
ICC	-.147	.261	120

As it is shown in above table, there was a negative relationship between L2 learners' ICC and L2-learning motivation, $r = -.147$, $p > .261$, $n = 120$.

9. Difference between ICC and Motivation of English and Non-English EFL Learners

The statistical results of this part were analyzed using the independent samples t-test process to determine whether there was a difference between the relationship of ICC and motivation of English and non-English EFL learners.

The independent samples t-test was calculated to find out whether there was any significant difference between the ICC scores and motivations scores of English and non-English EFL students. The t-test results for ICC scores and motivation scores of the two groups of the participants are shown in table 5.

Table 5 Independent sample t-test for ICC and motivation of English and non-English EFL learners

	N	Mean	SD	T	Sig
English	120	115.9	45.48	-.110	-.912
Non-English	120	116.5	45.78		

As Table 5 shows there was no significant difference between the ICC and motivation of English and non-English EFL learners. ICC mean score ($M = 1125.9$, $SD = 45.48$) and motivation score ($M = 116.5$, $SD = 45.78$). That is the Iranian EFL learners did not carry out differently on the ICC questionnaire in comparison with the motivation. The magnitude of the differences in the mean was very small.

10. Relationship between ICC and Achievement of English EFL Learners

The statistical results of this part were analyzed using the Pearson correlation process to determine whether there was a reciprocal and mutual relationship between the measures of ICC and achievement of English EFL learners.

Frist, descriptive statistics was computed for ICC and achievement of English EFL learners. Second, to look at the relationship between the L2 learners' ICC and achievement a Pearson correlation was conducted. The results of the descriptive statistics are shown in table 6.

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics of ICC and Achievement of English EFL Learners

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewedness	Kurtosis
ICC	60	65	87	73	4.85	.553	.255
Achievement	60	10	19	13.52	2.23	-.344	-.516

As it is shown in the above table, the number of participants were 60. There was only one group with two sets of data (ICCQ, achievement). The ICCQ scores were (Min = 65, Max = 87) with the mean of 73 and standard deviation of 4.85. In contrast, the achievement scores were (Min = 10, Max = 19) with the mean of 13.52 and standard deviation of 2.23. The skewedness and kurtosis values indicated that the normality assumptions were met.

Then, the Pearson correlation was used to explore the relationship between the ICCQ and achievement of English EFL learners. Initial analyses were performed to make sure there was no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity. Table 7 shows the results of the correlation for ICC and achievement scores.

Table 7 Relationship between ICC and achievement of English EFL learners

	Achievement	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
ICC	-.961	.000	60

As Table 7 shows, there was a strong positive correlation between ICC and achievement of English EFL learners, $r = -.961$, $n = 60$, $p < .01$, with high levels of ICC being associated with higher levels of achievement

11. Discussion

ICC is a kind of ability to effectively demonstrate universal (intercultural) communication. This study addressed the association of ICC to L2 learning motivation and achievement. As noted in the previous part, the first and second research questions addressed the relationship between ICC and motivation of English and non-English EFL learners. the correlation results showed that there was no significant relationship between the L2 learners' ICC and their motivation of both Iranian English and non-English EFL learner. So, it can be discussed that L2 learners' ICC is not closely associated with their L2-learning motivation. The results suggest that L2 learners possess a tendency to reach out to other cultures. In more functional terms, L2 learners with high levels of ICC reveal more curiosity and enthusiasm to participate in social interaction with members of *other* groups or speakers of *other* languages, for instance by undertaking to communicate with tourists, exchange information, and exhibit cross-cultural variations and attractions. These motivated L2 users can reach culture bumps and ambiguous conditions with boldness and greater facility. On the other hand, L2 learners with lower levels of ICC may simply prevent such learning opportunities. Therefore, ICC can be regarded as conceptually linked to L2-learning motivation and communication tendency.

This finding is opposed to an argument that was made earlier in L2 motivation literature by Gardner and Lambert (1959), Gardner and Lambert (1972) put forward that learners' understanding of other cultures and attitudes toward L2 community is favorably linked to their motivation in language learning.

However, because this area has been researched sparingly over the years (Byram, 2008; Byram & Feng, 2005), this evidenced association will be of great significance particularly to the scarce literature on the contribution of intercultural communication dispositions to L2 motivation and language-learning success.

According to Cohen and Dornyei (2002), "it is worth mentioning that opposed to the finding of this study, L2 learners' motivation as one major source of learner-specific variation is considered fundamental in L2 learning and without it, nothing much happens" (p. 172).

According to Maleki and Zangani (2007) and Sadeghi (2005), they recommend that improving Iranian EFL learners' intercultural communicative dispositions can make them more motivation for L2 learning and success in L2 communication in the multicultural interconnected world. All in all, research on students in international schools and engagement programs in a second language context indicates that access to more opportunities for closer contact with other cultures results in a leaning toward learn and attain in the L2 (Sinicrope et al. 2007).

Thus, learners' intercultural nature to foreign language learning and taking side with *otherness* did not influence their L2 motivation, and motivational factors, in turn, guide the learning process and ensure achievement. In brief, it is advisable for L2 research and pedagogy to approach the learning-teaching situation from such a social constructivist perspective. It should be acknowledged, however, that the insights gained cannot go too far beyond the social-cultural milieu and learners of interest in this study (i.e. Iran) with its specific sociocultural and geo-political considerations and attributes.

The third research question addressed the differences between ICC and motivation of English and non-English EFL learners. As noted in the previous part, the correlation results showed that there was no significant difference between the L2 learners' ICC and motivation of Iranian English and non-English EFL learner. So it can be discussed that L2 learners ICC was not closely associated with their L2 learning motivation.

This finding is opposed to relationship between ICC and L2 motivation that is critical importance to L2 education. The implication is that teaching programs and activities be delineated in a way that taps learners' intercultural communicative potentials and tendencies. L2 instructors should plan to raise learners' awareness of intercultural issues at work in classroom communicative activities and have them show upon cultural variations (Liddicoat & Crozet, 2000). In L2 classrooms, this can be attained by acquainting students with interesting variations that exist across cultures by the use of playing documentaries and reports, showing pictures and posters, and involving them in role-playing and communication with different partners and informants. Interestingly, Dornyei and Csizer (1998) conclude that teachers need to "familiarize learners with the target language culture" as one of their proposed "ten commandments for motivating language learners" in L2 classrooms (p. 212).

The fourth and the last question of this research addressed the relationship between ICC and achievement of English EFL learners. To reach the answer of this question, the researcher used ICCQ for achieving the ICC of the participants, while for the achievement the researcher used their annual scores average of the university to get the achievement of the participants. So, it can be argued that L2 learners' ICC is closely associated with their L2-learning achievement.

According to the results, there was a strong significant relationship between ICC and achievement of Iranian English major EFL students. This finding backs up an argument made much earlier in L2 achievement and motivation literature by Gardner and Lambert (1959), Gardner and Lambert (1972) argue that learners' understanding of other cultures and attitudes toward the L2 community is favorably linked to their motivation and achievement in language learning.

This observation points to the reciprocal relationship that exists between L2 achievement and ICC and the fact that further research is required to probe this non-reciprocity from a social psychological perspective. The finding of this study can be seen in light of a social conception of the close link between L2 achievement and intercultural communication and alignment, what has also been theoretically referred to as second language socialization (e.g. Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen, 2003).

12. Conclusion

To cut a long story short, this study aimed at investigating whether there was any relationship between Iranian L2 learners' ICC and their L2-learning motivation and their achievement. In other words, this study sought the relationship between ICC and L2 learning of Iranian EFL learners, motivation and achievement was. The study was carried out in an EFL intercultural context where L2 learners do not have exposure and contact with English-speaking people and used questionnaire as the data collection procedure.

The results depicted that there was no significant correlation between ICC and L2 motivation of English and non-English Iranian EFL learners. Motivation had no effect on ICC level and even more ICC had no effect on motivation. On the subject of difference between ICC and motivation of English and non-English EFL learners, the result showed that there was a significant relationship between them. Hence, ICC and motivation had effect on both English and non-English EFL learners. On the following, there was a significant relationship between ICC and achievement of English EFL learners due to the result of this study.

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