



5-2019

The Relationship Between Language, Emotional Intelligence, and Cultural Sensitivity

Sophia Root
Dominican University of California

<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2019.HONORS.ST.14>

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Root, Sophia, "The Relationship Between Language, Emotional Intelligence, and Cultural Sensitivity" (2019). *Honors Theses*. 55.
<https://doi.org/10.33015/dominican.edu/2019.HONORS.ST.14>

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Abstract

Knowing multiple languages, having a higher level of emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity are positive traits to carry in today's globalizing world. The present study looked at emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity levels between monolinguals and multilinguals. Participants participated through an electronic survey that included demographic questions pertaining to participant's language knowledge, and standardized measures for emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity. Results did not indicate a statistically significant relationship of emotional intelligence between monolinguals and multilinguals. The relationship of cultural sensitivity between monolinguals and multilinguals was also not found to be statistically significant. However, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between cultural sensitivity subscales and emotional intelligence subscales. Cultural sensitivity and emotional intelligence levels do not rise or fall depending on how many languages an individual knows. Nevertheless, an individual that has a high level of cultural sensitivity is also bound to have a high level of emotional intelligence.

Document Type

Honors Thesis

Degree Name

Bachelor of Science

Department

Psychology

First Reader

Afshin Gharib, PhD

Second Reader

Alison Howard, MA

Third Reader

Matthew S. Davis, PhD

Keywords

Language, Emotional Intelligence, Cultural Sensitivity, DEI

Subject Categories

International Relations | Linguistics | Psychology

The Relationship Between Language, Emotional Intelligence, and Cultural Sensitivity

By

Sophia Bahar Root

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Department of Political
Science & International Studies, Department of Psychology, and the Honors Program

Dominican University of California

2019

First Reader: Afshin Gharib, Ph.D.

Department of Psychology

Second Reader: Alison Howard, MA

Department of Political Science
&
International Studies

Thesis Advisor: Matthew S. Davis, Ph.D.

Department of Psychology

Honors Director: Lynn Sondag

MFA Department of Art, Art History, and
Design

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Acknowledgements

I would like to take this time to thank everyone that has helped and aided me in this process of completing this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to thank my family: my loving parents, Öznur and Scott, and my wonderful sister, Lydia. They supported me through every step of the way, in my accomplishments and failures. Second, I would like to thank my professors, three of which have been most involved with the creation of this thesis: Alison Howard, Matt Davis, and Afshin Gharib. Without their guidance and patience, this paper would not be possible. Finally, I would like to thank Dominican University of California for this wonderful opportunity to study, learn, and develop a thesis on an aspect of human nature I am, and have always been, most interested in: language.

Abstract

Knowing multiple languages, having a higher level of emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity are positive traits to carry in today's globalizing world. The present study looked at emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity levels between monolinguals and multilinguals. Participants participated through an electronic survey that included demographic questions pertaining to participant's language knowledge, and standardized measures for emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity. Results did not indicate a statistically significant relationship of emotional intelligence between monolinguals and multilinguals. The relationship of cultural sensitivity between monolinguals and multilinguals was also not found to be statistically significant. However, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between cultural sensitivity subscales and emotional intelligence subscales. Cultural sensitivity and emotional intelligence levels do not rise or fall depending on how many languages an individual knows. Nevertheless, an individual that has a high level of cultural sensitivity is also bound to have a high level of emotional intelligence.

The Relationship Between Language, Emotional Intelligence, and Cultural Sensitivity

The Earth has over 6,000 human languages. Within each language are various parts that make a language unique from the other 5,999 languages that exist in the world (Eagleman & Downar, 2016). For instance, languages each have their own pattern of sound, writing, reading, and gestures. Putting a language's unique pattern of sound, writing, reading, and gestures together creates a language. Language as a whole concept can be described as ideas translated into signals. The signals are then absorbed by another individual through listening or reading. The absorbed signals are then understood to mean the ideas that were initially translated into signals (Eagleman & Downar, 2016). In other words, language is a form of communication between one human and another. However, without learning a language, the ability to communicate would not be possible.

Luckily, humans are designed to understand and use language. At a young age, children learn the grammatical rules of their mother tongue subconsciously (O'Grady, Aronoff, & Rees-Miller, 2003). New born babies are able to identify speech (O'Grady, Aronoff, & Rees-Miller, 2003). It is not until they are a little over six months old that babies begin to formulate the ability to speak. For a baby, speech comes in the form of babbling. When a baby turns a year old, he or she will say his or her first words, which often is responded with elated and joyous parents (O'Grady, Aronoff, & Rees-Miller, 2003). From that moment on, as children grow, so do their ability to use their native language (O'Grady, Aronoff, & Rees-Miller, 2003). For the rest of these children's lives, as they grow and mature into adults, their native language is used on a subconscious level (O'Grady, Aronoff, & Rees-Miller, 2003).

Language has been believed to be more than a system of communication. For instance, Whorf (1956) supported Saussure's idea on the language system. Saussure's idea stated that

language structured the way in which people conceptualized the world. Consequently, people who spoke different languages would perceive the world differently. Whorf (1956) identified the theory of language influencing people's conceptualization of reality as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Parviz & Somayyeh (2012) looked at the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and compared it to other theories that claimed that thought influenced the development of language. Another way of thinking about the language-thought debate elaborated by Parviz & Somayyeh (2012), is by looking at the relationship between culture and language. Culture is a vague word and is comprised of many parts, just like language (Eagleton, 2016). Furthermore, languages have been known to associate with a particular culture (Brown, 1970). Whether or not the language effects culture or vice versa is still up to debate.

Every culture has a unique language, and people who are born and raised in a particular culture naturally develop the ability to speak that culture's language. Communicating with one's mother tongue is a subconscious act. However, learning to use another language is not a subconscious act and can in fact be difficult to learn. Numerous studies (Ebrahimi, Khoshsima & Zare-Behtash, 2018; Pishghadam, 2009; Soodmand & Rahimi, 2016) have identified a solution to how to relieve the difficult symptoms associated with learning a new language. These studies have found that emotional intelligence could aid people who are trying to learn a foreign language.

Language

The purpose of language is to articulate one's thoughts to another individual through words and sentences from which meaning is derived (Eagleman & Downar, 2016). Fauconnier & Turner (2002) found language to be vital to human existence. According to Fauconnier & Turner (2002), there has been an ongoing debate on whether or not language is instinctual. One side of the debate argues that language is an evolutionary development to help mankind survive. The other side of the debate finds that language is innate, a part of human instinct, which explains why babies easily begin developing the ability to communicate.

Regardless of how language come to be in the world today, one thing is for sure, language is important to humans. To some, language even shapes the way in which people view the world. For instance, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis suggests that language binds people to a certain way of thinking (Parviz & Somayyeh, 2012). Whorf (1956) states that people assume they are free to think as they wish, when in fact language holds people to a particular way of thinking. The only way in which a person would be able to truly be able to think freely is if he or she knew a variety of linguistic systems. The other side of the language-thought debate described by Parviz & Somayyeh (2012) suggests that language merely mirrors a cognitive system. In other words, thought impacts the way in which language is developed. Chomsky (1983) support this side of the language-thought debate through Chomsky's independent theory. Smith (1999) further elaborated on Chomsky's theory, and found that language not only mirrored the mind, but that the mind utilized language. In other words, thought could not live without a linguistic system.

Language & Cultural Sensitivity

In many ways, the language-thought debate is a reflection of the tightly wound relationship between language and culture. When one thinks of the word 'culture' numerous definitions could come to mind because of how complex the concept is. Eagleton (2016) stated that culture has been vaguely defined. Its meaning could range from poetry to the way in which a society pours tea. What contributes to the complexity of the concept is the fact that the definition of 'culture' has changed. The word did not become popular until the 19th century. It was a synonym for civilization until 'culture' evolved to mean values (Eagleton, 2016). The word itself has changed meaning since the 19th century, making it difficult to specifically define the term.

That being said, several people have found their own definitions of culture. For instance, Solgi & Tafazoli (2018) defined culture as the characteristics that a group of people share. These shared characteristics range from language, to art, to religion. On the other hand, Fuchs (2001) defined culture as being about knowledge and meaning. He found that culture is much larger than a single individual, which is why people are so influenced by the culture they grow up in. Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (2000) believed that culture is what sustains people and that it is innate in every human being. For the purpose of the present study, culture will be defined as the specific values, materials, art, and creativity from which people have chosen to live by.

What further complicates our understanding of culture, is the variety of cultures that exist in the world. Cultures differ from one another, and these differences range on a spectrum from slightly to very different. What one culture finds important another culture may find insignificant. However, there are a few commonalities between all cultures.

For example, cultures are made up of three common layers. The first layer is defined as explicit culture. Explicit culture are the observable aspects of any culture, such as the language,

food, buildings, agriculture, monuments, and markets. The middle layer includes norms and values, such as the proper way to greet someone. The core part of a culture is defined by its philosophy regarding human existence. It tries to give meaning to people's everyday lives, and how people find this in their culture is what makes up the core of any culture. Put simply, these three layers can be drawn back to the definition of culture, which are the values, art, materials, and creativity by which people have chosen to live by (Trompemaars & Hampden-Turner, 2000).

Another example of similarities between cultures is that every culture can be put in one of two categories: individualistic and collectivist. Niedenthal, Krauth-Gruber & Ric (2006) defined an individualistic society as one in which societal status is not considered important. For a society that does not emphasize the importance of status, people who have positions in the government would not feel a sense of taboo when mingling with blue collar workers. Instead, equality and personal success are found to be important. People are seen as independent from others, and are encouraged to express their individuality. On the other hand, collectivist cultures are hierarchical based society. Status and power are very important to people from collectivist cultures. People in a collectivist society believe that those that work in prestigious professions (such as doctors and lawyers) should not mix with blue collar workers. Additionally, people aim to gain power through working at a high paying job, being good friends with influential people, or having a job with much influence (such as working for the government). The norms and roles of the individual are clearly defined, and collectivist cultures promote the building of relationships and do not recognize individual achievement as something that should be encouraged. An example of the differences between individualistic and collectivist societies was articulated by Holyoak & Morrison (2005), which compared European and African cultures.

They found that technological characteristics were more developed in the individualistic society of Europe and social intelligence more developed in the collectivist society of Africa.

Just as culture is complex, so is language, making language and culture two sides of the same coin. The complexity of language can be found from its structure, such as grammar and the ability to be creative when using language. For example, people have used language to creatively write poems and sing songs. There are a variety of languages and language uses, and the ways in which people choose to communicate to one another through the use of language is vast (O'Grady, Aronoff, Archibald & Rees-Miller, 2003). For instance, language traits such as words carrying different weights of meaning and conversational implications all contribute to the complexity of language. Additionally, each language is related to its own social and cultural attitudes, memories, emotions, and beliefs. For instance, Brown (1970) articulated the story of a German graduate student who commented that in the English language the word 'appreciate' exists, but there is not an equivalent word in German. The fact that a word in one language could exist when an equivalent word does not exist in another language could affect how people think in their respective languages. This is why translating is such a difficult task. El Ghoudani, Pulido-Martos & Lopez-Zafra (2018) understood the difficulty of translating through working on translating an English questionnaire into Moroccan Arabic. Meaning can be and is often lost in translation, which is why it is important to also translate the meaning and tone of the sentence in addition to the specific wording when translating. Difficulty in translation is due to differences among languages, and typically languages are associated with a specific culture.

Because language and culture are closely connected, knowing more than one language may increase a person's cultural sensitivity. Those who try to learn or work with foreign languages are also exposing themselves to different cultures. This exposure may result in the

individual being more culturally sensitive than if they were not familiar with foreign languages. Furthermore, in order for people to work effectively in today's culturally diverse and globalizing world, being culturally sensitive is important.

Similar to culture, cultural sensitivity does not have a concrete definition (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2016). However, a couple studies (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2016; Cope, 2015) have looked into finding a concrete definition of the term cultural sensitivity. First, Cope (2015) stated that cultural sensitivity is often also called cultural awareness and cultural competence. It was defined as an individual's awareness and ability to be sensitive to the beliefs and values of culturally diverse people. Second, Alizadeh & Chavan (2016) described cultural competence to be an individuals' requirement to work harmoniously with people who are culturally different. Cultural sensitivity in this study is defined as an individual's ability to be sensitive and respect the values and beliefs of people who are culturally different. Institutes, such as those that work with health professionals, believe that developing a culturally sensitive atmosphere is beneficial to cater to a diverse population that has resulted from an increase in migration and globalization (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2016). The importance of teaching health professionals cultural competency has increased dramatically. Consequently, efforts to teach health professionals cultural awareness have resulted in the need to find the most effective teaching method (Tormala, Patel, Soukup, & Clarke, 2018). For instance, Tormala, Patel, Soukup, & Clarke (2018) found that a two-stage developmental approach to cultural formulation (CF) assignments was an effective way to teach mental health professionals to be more culturally sensitive. The study was conducted through a doctorate level course, in which participants were given two CF assignments that was analyzed for key themes of cultural sensitivity. The first CF assignment was given a lot of feedback, which resulted in participant's cultural awareness to increase by the second CF assignment. Other

studies also describe the importance of increasing cultural competence amongst health professionals (Sandeem Moore, & Swanda, 2018; Tormala, Patel, Soukup, & Clarke, 2018).

Cultural sensitivity not only an important attribute to the health institution, but it also benefits anyone interacting with culturally diverse people. However, misunderstandings are inevitable between the communication of culturally different people, which could result in an argument. That being said, an attribute that could further help culturally different people communicate harmoniously, would be emotional intelligence.

Language & Emotional Intelligence

Sternberg (2003) defined emotional intelligence to be a person's ability to express his/her emotions accurately, as well as being able to access the correct feelings in association to their thoughts. In other words, it is an individual's ability to understand and regulate his/her emotions. According to Collin et al. (2012) feelings are conscious and are the interpretations of what one's emotions is telling them. Feelings do not overwhelm a person like emotions do, and feelings do not necessarily result in a behavioral response. The fact that feelings may not result in a behavioral response indicates that people can control or regulate their actions that may be motivated by emotions through the conscious interpretation of feelings. People regulate their emotions for many reasons, all of which depends on the nature of the situation and the person. However, sometimes it is because the emotion would be too painful to experience if they did not regulate it. Other times emotional regulation is due to societal pressures. People typically decide to regulate their emotions if the emotion they are feeling could potential harm themselves or others. However, in order to decide whether or not the emotion would harm someone, the individual must first acknowledge the emotion that he or she feels (Niedenthal, Krauth-Gruber & Ric, 2006).

The better a person is able to regulate his or her emotions, in a healthy way, the higher his or her emotional intelligence is. As a result, higher levels of emotional intelligence have been associated with better life satisfaction, which has been supported by the findings of a few studies (Gaher et al., 2014; Matthews, Zeidner & Roberts, 2002). First, Matthews, Zeidner & Roberts (2002) found that people with high scores of emotional intelligence perceived their feelings more accurately and were able to repair their negative mood with an appropriate coping mechanism. They further stated that emotional intelligence is linked to an individual's ability to adjust to his or her circumstances. In other words, those with high levels of emotional intelligence are better at adapting to their environment, which helps eliminate negative emotions. Second, Gaher, et al. (2014) looked at the impact of emotional intelligence on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) patients, and found that having a higher level of emotional intelligence was correlated with being able to control one's behavior better when negative emotions arise. Overall, having a higher level of emotional intelligence suggests that an individual can eliminate negative emotions, which is correlated with having an overall happy life and better life satisfaction.

Emotionally intelligent individuals are better able to cope with the traumas they have to endure and they tend to be better at eliminating stress in the environment than others. They choose to conduct their personal and social lives in a way that brings out positivity and less stress. Without being able to control one's own emotional response effectively, his or her achievement on the task at hand can suffer, such as learning a new language. Learning a new language is difficult because it can cause stress and negative emotions to arise. Language complexity is what makes learning a foreign language difficult. Despite how difficult learning another language is, there are some techniques that can help. Being empathetic, motivated, and understanding one's cognitive style are all positive skills to have when trying to learn a foreign

language (O'Grady, Aronoff, Archibald & Rees-Miller, 2003; Shao, Yu, & Ji, 2013; Soodmand & Rahimi, 2016). These skills are also associated with having a higher level of emotional intelligence. Therefore, a high level of emotional intelligence is associated with learning a foreign language more successfully and with greater ease. Studies that support this claim (Ebrahimi, Khoshshima & Zare-Behtash, 2018; Pishghadam, 2009; Soodmand & Rahimi, 2016) have found that foreign language learners with a high level of emotional intelligence are far more successful at learning the new language than those with a lower level of emotional intelligence.

First, Ebrahimi, Khoshshima & Zare-Behtash (2018) was a 'Quasi Experimental Study' design. This study had Iranian participants, who were all were English learners, answer questions on a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the experiment as well as at the end of the students' academic year. Participants all had the same level of proficiency in English when the study began. Participants in the experimental group were taught Emotional Intelligence and along side English reading skills, while participants in the control group were not. Results indicated that students in the experimental group improved more in Emotional Intelligence and Reading skills than the control group.

Second, Pishghadam (2009) study also took place in Iran, and it measured the effect of emotional and verbal intelligence on participants' English language learning success. Participants were put in one of three groups, emotional, verbal, or control. Over a course of three months, participants in the experimental groups attended English classes with professors that incorporated emotional intelligence training techniques. For instance, teachers had students discuss their feelings during the first half of the lesson. Participants' English proficiency was determined by having students take the TOEFL test. Results indicated that emotional intelligence helped the Iranian students learn English better.

Third, Soodmand & Rahimi (2016) looked at the effect of reflective thinking, speaking ability, and emotional intelligence on people's ability to learn a foreign language. The study also took place in Iran. Participants in this study were asked to take two questionnaires that tested for reflective thinking skills and emotional intelligence levels, and the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) that tested students' speaking skills in the English language. Results indicated a significant relationship between reflective thinking, emotional intelligence, and speaking ability. Furthermore, levels of reflective thinking and emotional intelligence predicted participant's speaking ability in the English language.

Research by Abdolrezapour (2017), Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham (2008), Ebrahimi, Khoshsima, and Zare-Behtash (2018), Ozanska-Ponikwia (2017), Pishghadam (2009), Shao, Yu & Ji (2013), and Soodmand & Rahimi (2016) and found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and foreign language learning. Furthermore, since a higher level of emotional intelligence is associated with better foreign language learning, this could also assume that a high emotional intelligence score would be linked to a better acceptance of different cultures. In other words, a better understanding of a different culture would assume that the individual is culturally sensitive, particularly towards the culture's language that they are working to learn.

Ożańska-Ponikwia (2012) and Panicacci (2014) further supported the link between language, emotional intelligence, and cultural sensitivity. For example, Ożańska-Ponikwia (2012) discussed why people tend to say that they feel differently when communicating in a different language. For example, people who felt differently when using another language reported change in their body language, intonation, and facial expressions. The study also looked at how emotional intelligence traits such as emotion expression, empathy, social awareness,

emotion perception, emotion management, emotionality and sociability influence the perception of any changes in behavior while operating in a foreign language. Results indicated that people who had a higher level of emotional intelligence were more able to notice behavioral differences when using a foreign language. For example, a behavioral difference could be being louder and more energetic when speaking one language and reserved and distant in the other. Similarly, Panicacci (2014) looked at the relationship between immersion in a foreign language and immersion in the culture. Measures such as the length of stay in the foreign culture, a person's opinion of his or her own proficiency, and expression of his or her emotions in his or her mother tongue and foreign language were examined. People who noticed differences in their behavior in the different languages was due to their higher level of emotional intelligence. Foreign language learning can be difficult, but stress related to learning a new language could be relieved with a higher level of emotional intelligence.

Individual cultures and their respective languages are unique in their own way and yet at the same time, many languages and cultures have similarities to other languages and cultures. Because of the connection of these two concepts, foreign language learning, in particular, assumes that one is also learning about a different culture. When an individual explores another culture, he/she is bound to become more culturally sensitive, especially if he or she loves the language being learned. However, language learning is difficult and can stimulate negative emotions and stress, which is why having a high level of emotional intelligence is important if one wants to become fluent in a foreign language. Furthermore, having an overall high level of emotional intelligence benefits the individual with an overall better life satisfaction. Language, emotional intelligence, and cultural sensitivity benefit those that wish to successfully participate in the globalizing world we live in. In order to work better with people from

different cultures, having a high level of emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity is important. Without it, such sensitive communication can lead to people offending one another.

Goals & Hypotheses of the Present Study

The present study was an attempt to further explore the relationship between knowing multiple languages, emotional intelligence, and cultural sensitivity. The study focused on two main aspects regarding the relationship of the three variables. First, the study focused on the relationship between emotional intelligence and language. Second, the study tried to determine the relationship between cultural sensitivity and language. What this study analyzed, differs from previous research that looked at emotional intelligence as the independent variable. Instead, the present study looked at language knowledge as an independent variable. The dependent variables in the present study are the level of emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity. Furthermore, the present study wishes to determine whether or not there is a deeper relationship among these three variables of language, emotional intelligence, and cultural sensitivity, more than what previously mentioned research has shown.

From the goals previously mentioned, two main hypotheses were made. The first hypothesis for this study was that if a person knows more than one language then he or she would have a higher emotional intelligence score than a person who knows only one language. The second hypothesis for this study was that if a person knows more than one language, then he or she would have a higher level of cultural sensitivity. In other words, it is hypothesized that if an individual is multilingual, then he or she would have a higher level of cultural sensitivity and emotional intelligence than people who only know one language.

Method

Participants

Participants were selected through convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a form of non-probability sampling that is used to select people that meet certain requirements for a study (Goodwin, 563). Participants in the study were recruited in Morocco to ensure that a proportional number of multilinguals will participate, because one of the variables of the study is people's knowledge of languages. The recruitment process began with obtaining permission to reach out to students at a small liberal arts university in Northern California and a university in Morocco. Once permission for both universities was approved, an e-mail with the link to the online survey was distributed to faculty and staff, which was then forwarded to students.

Additionally, other participants were recruited through social media, by uploading posts that had a brief description of the survey. People from social media who wished to participate were asked to email the researcher, allowing her to respond via e-mail with a link to the online questionnaire.

The sample of the present study consisted of 88 participants. Of the participants, 26 (29.5%) were male and 62 (70.5%) were female. Of those sampled, 11 (12.5%) were monolinguals and 77 (87.5%) were multilinguals. Of the participants, 37 (42%) were American and 51 (58%) were from a different country. The most prominent nationality was Morocco. Of those sampled, 40 (45%) were Moroccan. The participants' ranged in age from 18 to 77, with a mean of 24.27, a standard deviation of 9.07, and a range of 59. Of participants' first languages, the most prominent native language was English, 35 (39.8%). The second most prominent was Arabic, followed by Darija, which is Morocco's dialect of Arabic. Of those sampled, 23 (26.1%) grew up speaking Arabic and 10 (11.4%) new Darija as their native language. The most common foreign languages spoken by participants were English, French, and Spanish. Of the participants,

53 (20%) spoke English, 41 (16%) spoke French, and 26 (10%) spoke Spanish. Most of the participants were not third culture kids (TCKs), with only 13 (14.8%) being TCKs, 72 (81.8%) not being a TCK, and 2 (2.3%) participants unsure of whether or not they were a TCK. When participants were asked if they formally studied the foreign languages they knew, 66 (75%) of participants reported they formally studied the first out of a possible of four foreign languages they knew. Most participants, 62 (70%), were fluent in their first out of a possible of four foreign languages they knew. Participants who knew four foreign languages, 12 (14%) were beginners and only 2 (2.3%) were fluent. Again, those that spoke four foreign languages, 14 (15.9%) formally studied the foreign language, 8 (9.1%) did not.

Materials

A Letter of Introduction briefed the participants on the study, which encouraged them to answer honestly, ensuring them anonymity and providing other details pertaining to participants' rights, as well as how participants could obtain results of the study when completed. A three-part survey was used to measure 3 areas of interest: first participants' language background, second emotional intelligence and third cultural sensitivity levels.

First, the participants were asked to answer a number of demographic questions and a series of questions related to their knowledge of other languages. The demographic questions asked one's age, sex, citizenship, and the country in which they grew up. Other questions measured individuals' language knowledge, such as whether they speak other languages and their proficiency in each language and whether or not they formally studied it.

Second, the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form or TEIQue-SF (Petrides, 2009) was used to measure emotional intelligence. This test has a total of 30 questions which are responded to using a 7-point scale, with 1 indicating that the participant completely

disagreed with the statement provided, and 7 indicating complete agreement. Questions in the TEIQue-SF were worded as such, “I usually find it difficult to regulate my emotions”, which inquired on people’s level of emotional intelligence.

Third, the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (Chen & Starosta, 2000) was used to measure individuals’ cultural sensitivity levels. This test is comprised of 24 items that are rated on a 5-point scale, with 5 indicating “Strongly Agree”, and 1 indicating “Strongly Disagree”. This test has 5 sub-scales that include: Interaction Engagement, Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction Confidence, Interaction Enjoyment, and Interaction Attentiveness. These sub-scales provide a well-rounded understanding of an individual’s level of cultural sensitivity. ‘Interaction Engagement’ refers to how comfortable someone is in interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds. ‘Respect for Cultural Differences’, just as the title suggests, measure whether people respect individuals from culturally different backgrounds. ‘Interaction Confidence’ measures confidence when interacting with culturally different individuals. ‘Interaction Enjoyment’ refers to whether people like to interact with culturally different people. Finally, ‘Interaction Attentiveness’ measures respondents’ care and sensitivity in inter-cultured interactions. Copies of all measures can be found in Appendix A.

Procedure

Individuals interested in participating in the study followed a link to an online, anonymous, survey that was accessed on the platform SurveyMonkey.com. The purpose of using survey research for the present study is to collect data pertaining to people’s perceptions of themselves, specifically of people’s self-reflections on how well they know a language, on their emotional intelligence level, and on their cultural sensitivity level. The best way to collect data about people’s perceptions is to ask them directly. Therefore, survey research was used to collect

data for the present study. The process of collecting data began with receiving permission to conduct the study. The study was approved by the IRBPHP at Dominican University of California (reference number of 10759). People who indicated an interest in participating were asked to contact the researcher via e-mail, and a reply was sent with a link to the survey. Once participants clicked on the link, they first saw a letter of introduction, followed by demographic questions and questions related to their knowledge of other languages. Following this part of the survey, participants saw questions related to emotional intelligence, which was then followed by cultural sensitivity questions. The questionnaire took approximately 11 minutes to complete. Once the participants had completed the survey, they were thanked for their participation and reminded about how to obtain results of the study once it is completed.

Results

The first hypothesis was that if a person knows more than one language, then he or she would have a higher emotional intelligence score than a person who knows only one language. To test this hypothesis participants were divided into two groups: monolinguals and multilinguals. Mean scores for these groups were compared on each of the four subscales of the TEIQue (Petrides, 2009), which measured various aspects of emotional intelligence. The first subscale measured well-being, the second self-control, the third emotionality, and the fourth sociability. Higher scores on each of the subscales indicated higher level of emotional intelligence. The mean and standard deviation of emotional intelligence subscale scores for monolinguals and multilinguals can be found in *Table 1*.

A series of independent samples t-tests compared monolingual and multilingual participants' emotional intelligence scores. The results indicated that, contrary to the hypothesis,

there were no significant difference between the two groups on any of the emotional intelligence subscales.

Table 1

Means and standard deviations for monolinguals and multilinguals' emotional intelligence subscale scores.

	Well-being	Self-control	Emotionality	Sociability
Monolingual	M = 5.52	M = 4.54	M = 5.28	M = 4.58
	SD = 1.26	SD = 0.78	SD = 0.93	SD = 0.67
Multilingual	M = 5.72	M = 4.5	M = 5.43	M = 4.9
	SD = 0.98	SD = 1.04	SD = 0.8	SD = 0.96

On all measures, higher numbers indicate a higher degree of emotional intelligence levels.

The second hypothesis was that if a person knows more than one language, then he or she should have a higher level of cultural sensitivity. This hypothesis was tested by comparing the cultural sensitivity subscale scores of monolinguals and multilinguals. The participants' cultural sensitivity was tested through the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (Chen & Starosta, 2000), which is comprised of five subscales: interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction confidence, interaction enjoyment, and interaction attentiveness. Higher scores on each subscale indicate higher levels of participants' cultural sensitivity. The means and standard deviations for the cultural sensitivity subscales of monolinguals are presented in *Table 2*. Again, a series of independent samples t-tests were used to determine whether monolinguals and

multilinguals differed significantly with regard to cultural sensitivity. However, contrary to the hypothesis, the results showed no significant difference between the groups.

Table 2

Means and standard deviations for monolinguals and multilinguals' cultural sensitivity subscale scores.

	Interaction Engagement	Respect for Cultural Differences	Interaction Confidence	Interaction Enjoyment	Interaction Attentiveness
Monolingual	M = 4.21	M = 4.47	M = 3.58	M = 4.12	M = 3.94
	SD = 0.51	SD = 0.44	SD = 0.77	SD = 0.62	SD = 0.59
Multilingual	M = 4.24	M = 4.52	M = 3.89	M = 4.36	M = 4.02
	SD = 0.46	SD = 0.45	SD = 0.79	SD = 0.71	SD = 0.64

On all measures, higher numbers indicate a higher degree of cultural sensitivity levels.

Although it was not a major focus of the study, a series of correlations were done between cultural sensitivity and emotional intelligence scores. The correlations between the emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity subscales were statistically significant and positively correlated. The only correlation between emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity subscales that was not statistically significant was emotionality and interaction enjoyment. The statistically significant correlations between the emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity subscales are represented in *Table 3*. In general, those that had a high level of cultural sensitivity also had a high level of emotional intelligence.

Table 3*Emotional Intelligence and Cultural Sensitivity Subscale correlations.*

Cultural Sensitivity	Emotional Intelligence			
	Subscales			
Subscales	Well-being	Self-control	Emotionality	Sociability
Interaction	($r(85) = 0.37, p < .01$)	($r(81) = 0.32, p < .01$)	($r(81) = 0.32, p < .01$)	($r(86) = 0.26, p < .05$)
Engagement	**	**	**	*
Respect for				
Cultural	($r(85) = 0.25, p < .05$)	($r(81) = 0.28, p < .05$)	($r(86) = 0.27, p < .05$)	($r(86) = 0.22, p < .05$)
Differences	*	*	*	*
Interaction	($r(85) = 0.46, p < .01$)	($r(81) = 0.43, p < .01$)	($r(86) = 0.28, p < .01$)	($r(86) = 0.42, p < .01$)
Confidence	**	**	**	**
Interaction	($r(85) = 0.27, p < .05$)	($r(81) = 0.31, p < .01$)	Not Statistically	($r(86) = 0.28, p < .01$)
Enjoyment	*	**	Significant.	**
Interaction	($r(85) = 0.28, p < .01$)	($r(81) = 0.24, p < .05$)	($r(86) = 0.25, p < .05$)	($r(86) = 0.27, p < .05$)
Attentiveness	**	*	*	*

On all measures, higher numbers indicate a higher degree of cultural sensitivity and emotional intelligence levels.

* indicates correlation significant at $p < 0.05$.

** indicates correlation significant at $p < 0.01$.

Discussion

Contrary to the hypotheses, no significant differences between monolinguals and multilinguals were found with regard to either emotional intelligence or cultural sensitivity levels. However, the correlations between cultural sensitivity and emotional intelligence subscales were statistically significant. Cultural sensitivity and emotional intelligence had a positive relationship, which meant that participants with higher levels of emotional intelligence tended to have higher levels of cultural sensitivity.

However, these findings do not coincide with findings of previous studies that found a difference in emotional intelligence depending on one's level of foreign language learning (Abdolrezapour, 2017; Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham, 2008; Ebrahimi, Khoshsima, and Zare-Behtash, 2018; Ozanska-Ponikwia, 2017; Pishghadam, 2009; Shao, Yu & Ji, 2013; Soodmand & Rahimi, 2016). Perhaps the difference lies in the fact that emotional intelligence may help people overcome obstacles when trying to achieve a goal, such as learning a new language, instead of being the product or a benefit of learning a new language. Furthermore, language and culture carry a relationship, because language is an aspect of culture and the language-thought debate suggested that language could influence thought or culture (Chomsky, 1983; Parviz & Somayyeh, 2012; Smith, 1999; Whorf, 1956). Therefore, one would assume that learning a foreign language would allow the individual to understand the culture associated with that foreign language. However, the assumption that knowing more than one language would make a person culturally competent may be false based on the statistically insignificant findings of cultural sensitivity subscales and participants' knowledge of foreign languages.

As a result of globalization, cultural sensitivity levels may be affected by factors that have little to do with language learning, such as increased travel and more diverse populations.

Since globalization began, people from around the world are traveling and immigrating more frequently. Consequently, people from diverse backgrounds have been able to interact with one another, whether it was for a business transaction or to get married. Regardless of the type of interaction culturally diverse people have been doing, globalization has been allowing people to become accustomed to interacting with others that are culturally different than themselves. Exposure to different cultures could most likely increase an individual's cultural sensitivity levels. Therefore, the fact that the world is globalizing could be a confounding variable for cultural sensitivity.

The study had several flaws which might have affected the results and led to a lack of significant findings. First, of the 88 participants, only 11 were monolingual. Perhaps if more monolinguals participated, the ratio would have been more equal, and the results might have come out differently. Second, some participants did not complete the survey in full. Consequently, two participants' responses had to be deleted from the data analysis because of how many questions they had skipped. If participants who skipped questions in the survey had not done so, perhaps the results would have come out differently. Third, the study might have had a higher participation rate if the survey had been shorter than 90 items. Participants typically dislike filling out long surveys, which was perhaps the reason why some participants skipped questions and potential participants chose to not participate. Fourth, the frequency at which people travel was not a question in the survey. As a result, frequency of travel could be a confounding variable because travel exposes people to culturally diverse people. Consequently, the frequency at which people travel could have been a confounding variable for cultural sensitivity, which was not accounted for in the study. Fifth, the study was only in English, which

did not account for people who could have participated if the survey was translated into other languages.

If the study were to be replicated, future researchers should consider a few revisions. First, the survey should be shorter and more concise. Second, participants should be asked about how frequently they travel to account for a potential confounding variable in cultural sensitivity levels. Third, a larger sample size with an equal ratio of monolinguals to multilinguals would give the study higher credibility to be generalized. Furthermore, most of the participants were American or Moroccan. Consequently, the two main languages accounted for in the study were English and Arabic. Perhaps having a more diverse population would have resulted in different results. Fourth, translating the survey to other languages, such as Arabic or French, would allow for a greater sample size. Furthermore, it eliminates the generalization of English based studies to the rest of the world who do not speak English and were not able to participate because of the English barrier.

Consequent to globalization, certain factors such as language knowledge, emotional intelligence, and cultural sensitivity have become favorable attributes for people to have. Therefore, further findings on the relationships between these three variables could aid people to develop these favorable attributes. Furthermore, a world with people who knew multiple languages, had higher levels of emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity could help culturally diverse populations get along better and potentially make the world a better place.

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Appendix A

Letter of Introduction

Dear Study Participant,

My name is Sophia Bahar Root and I am a senior getting my undergraduate degree in psychology and international studies at Dominican University of California. For my senior thesis I decided to focus on the topic of language and how it relates to how we think about the world. This study is being supervised by Matthew S. Davis, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology. I am requesting your voluntary participation in my study, which will require you to complete a survey which will be completely anonymous. If you do not wish to complete the survey or decide to discontinue your participation, then you can choose to drop out of the survey at any time and your data will be omitted from the analysis.

If you choose to participate in this study, then please take the time to answer the questions honestly; there are no right or wrong answers. The survey takes about ten minutes to complete, depending on how much time you take to answer each question.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at my e-mail address. If you have further questions you may contact my research supervisor, Matthew S. Davis, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology at matt.davis@dominican.edu, or the Dominican University of California Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS), which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the IRBPHS Office by calling (415) 482-3547 and leaving a voicemail message, by FAX at (415) 257-0165, or by writing to

IRBPHS, Office of Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dominican University of California, 50 Acacia Avenue, San Rafael, CA 95901.

If you would like to know the results of this study once it has been completed, a summary of the results will be presented at Dominican University Scholarly and Creative Works Conference on April 17, 2019 or you can contact me at the email address below and I will be happy to send you a brief summary of the results.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Sophia Bahar Root

sophia.root@students.dominican.edu

Demographic Questions

Please answer the following questions.

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your gender? ___Female, ___Male, Other (please specify) _____
3. What is your primary/native language? _____
4. Do you speak any languages other than your native language? ___Yes, ___No

If you answered no to Question 4, please skip down to Question 14. If yes, please continue to the next question.

5. Please specify which other languages you speak.
 - 1)_____
 - 2)_____
 - 3)_____
 - 4)_____
6. Language #1: For the first language you mentioned in Question 5, please rate how skilled/proficient you are in this language. (beginner) 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 (expert)
7. Language #1: Did you formally study this language? ___Yes, ___No
8. Language #2: For the second language you mentioned in Question 5, please rate how skilled/proficient you are in this language. (beginner) 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 (expert)
9. Language #2: Did you formally study this language? ___Yes, ___No
10. Language #3: For the third language you mentioned in Question 5, please rate how skilled/proficient you are in this language. (beginner) 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 (expert)

11. Language #3: Did you formally study this language? ___Yes, ___No
12. Language #4: For the fourth language you mentioned in Question 5, please rate how skilled/proficient you are in this language. (beginner) 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 (expert)
13. Language #4: Did you formally study this language? ___Yes, ___No
14. In which country or countries do you have a citizenship in? 1)_____
- 2)_____
- 3)_____
15. Are you a Third Culture Kid (TCK)?
- {Third Culture Kids (TCK) are children who spent the majority of their years growing up in a country different from the country or countries that their parents grew up in.}*
- ___Yes, ___No, ___I do not know
16. In Which country did you live in for the majority of your childhood years between the ages of preschool to eighteen years of age? _____

Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form or TEIQue-SF (Petrides, 2009)

17. Please rate each statement below by clicking on the number that best reflects your degree of agreement or disagreement with that statement. Do not think too long about the exact meaning of the statements. Work quickly and try to answer as accurately as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. There are seven possible responses to each statement ranging from 'Completely Disagree' (number 1) to 'Completely Agree' (number 7).

(Completely Disagree) 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 (Completely Agree)

- a. Expressing my emotions with words is not a problem for me. _____
- b. I often find it difficult to see things from another person's viewpoint. _____
- c. On the whole, I'm a highly motivated person. _____
- d. I usually find it difficult to regulate my emotions. _____
- e. I generally don't find life enjoyable. _____
- f. I can deal effectively with people. _____
- g. I tend to change my mind frequently. _____
- h. Many times, I can't figure out what emotion I'm feeling. _____
- i. I feel that I have a number of good qualities. _____
- j. I often find it difficult to stand up for my rights. _____

18. Please rate each statement below by clicking on the number that best reflects your degree of agreement or disagreement with that statement. Do not think too long about the exact meaning of the statements. Work quickly and try to answer as accurately as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. There are seven possible responses to each

statement ranging from ‘Completely Disagree’ (number 1) to ‘Completely Agree’ (number 7).

(Completely Disagree) 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 (Completely Agree)

- a. I’m usually able to influence the way other people feel. _____
- b. On the whole, I have a gloomy perspective on most things. _____
- c. Those close to me often complain that I don’t treat them right. _____
- d. I often find it difficult to adjust my life according to the circumstances. _____
- e. On the whole, I’m able to deal with stress. _____
- f. I often find it difficult to show my affection to those close to me. _____
- g. I’m normally able to “get into someone’s shoes” and experience their emotions. _____
- h. I normally find it difficult to keep myself motivated. _____
- i. I’m usually able to find ways to control my emotions when I want to. _____
- j. On the whole, I’m pleased with my life. _____

19. Please rate each statement below by clicking on the number that best reflects your degree of agreement or disagreement with that statement. Do not think too long about the exact meaning of the statements. Work quickly and try to answer as accurately as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. There are seven possible responses to each statement ranging from ‘Completely Disagree’ (number 1) to ‘Completely Agree’ (number 7).

(Completely Disagree) 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 (Completely Agree)

- a. I would describe myself as a good negotiator. _____
- b. I tend to get involved in things I later wish I could get out of. _____

- c. I often pause and think about my feelings. _____
- d. I believe I'm full of personal strengths. _____
- e. I tend to "back down" even if I know I'm right. _____
- f. I don't seem to have any power at all over other people's feelings. _____
- g. I generally believe that things will work out fine in my life. _____
- h. I find it difficult to bond well even with those close to me. _____
- i. Generally, I'm able to adapt to new environments. _____
- j. Others admire me for being relaxed. _____

Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (Chen & Starosta, 2000)

20. Below is a series of statements concerning your experiences with people from other cultures. There are no right or wrong answers, so please respond as honestly as possible. Please work quickly and record your first impression by indicating the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

(5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = uncertain, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree)

- a. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures. _____
- b. I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded. _____
- c. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures. _____
- d. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures. _____
- e. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures. _____
- f. I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures. _____

21. Again, please rate each of the following statements and remember, there are no right or wrong answers, so please respond as honestly as possible.

(5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = uncertain, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree)

- a. I don't like to be with people from different cultures. _____
- b. I respect the values of people from different cultures. _____
- c. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures. _____
- d. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures. _____
- e. I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts. _____

- f. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures. _____
22. Again, please rate each of the following statements and remember, there are no right or wrong answers, so please respond as honestly as possible.

(5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = uncertain, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree)

- a. I am open-minded to people from different cultures. _____
- b. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures. _____
- c. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures. _____
- d. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave. _____
- e. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures. _____
- f. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures. _____
23. Again, please rate each of the following statements and remember, there are no right or wrong answers, so please respond as honestly as possible.

(5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = uncertain, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree)

- a. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction. _____
- b. I think my culture is better than other cultures. _____
- c. I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction. _____
- d. I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons. _____
- e. I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues. _____

- f. I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me. _____

You have completed the survey. Thank you for your participation. If you would like to know the results of this study once it has been completed, a summary of the results will be presented at Dominican University of California Scholarly and Creative Works Conference on April 17, 2019 or you can contact me at the email address below and I will be happy to send you a brief summary of the results.

sophia.root@students.dominican.edu