



## The Effect of Watching English Language Videos on Iranian EFL Learners' Cultural Awareness and Incidental Vocabulary Learning

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### Abstract

The purpose of the current study was to explore the effect of watching foreign language (FL) videos on Iranian intermediate English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' cultural awareness. In addition, this study sought to investigate if watching FL videos can improve the EFL learners' incidental vocabulary learning. Two intact classes, taught by the same instructor, were considered as the two groups of the study. The experimental group (N = 35) watched the FL videos during five sessions while the control group (N = 35) did not have an opportunity to watch the videos and had their normal classes. The Peterson Cultural Awareness Test (PCAT), the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) were administered as the instruments in the current study. Results indicated that the participants' cultural awareness improved significantly after watching the FL videos. Moreover, the findings demonstrated that watching FL videos significantly promoted the EFL learners' incidental vocabulary learning. In practical terms, the findings suggest that language instructors take advantage of students' interest in watching videos and use it as an effective tool in the classroom to enhance the EFL learners' cultural awareness and vocabulary knowledge.

**Keywords:** English language video, cultural awareness, incidental vocabulary learning, EFL learners' attitude

### INTRODUCTION

Using videos as teaching materials can be conceptualized with the assumption that aural and visual support aids students in learning a language (Lin, 2010). Videos provide exposures to "real language," used in authentic settings and in the cultural context which the foreign language is spoken. Multimedia technology is praised for its ability to present students with substantive stretches of oral discourse embedded in a rich visual context (Bush, 2000). The rationale behind the extensive use of multimedia

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(e.g., video clips, movies, etc.) is that in addition to stimulating students' intrinsic interests, they can also simulate authentic and up-to-date linguistic and cultural exchanges encountered in the foreign country. In other words, video could introduce authentic sociolinguistic elements in the classroom without the necessity to travel to FL countries (Shrum & Glisan, 2000). A plethora of instructional material has put this increased availability of authentic texts to use and as a result, videos and interactive videos (CD-ROM) accompany beginning- and intermediate-level textbooks, with Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) and Internet-based material in pursuit (Bush, 2000; Chun & Plass, 2000).

Some theorists suggest that audio-visual materials are an excellent medium to teach culture because they take the learner to the heart of the target culture (Omaggio Hadley, 2001). Different research disciplines may conceive of the notion of culture differently, depending on the purposes of the investigation (Corbett, 2003). Holliday (2009) proposes looking at it in terms of the "old thinking" and "new thinking" about culture as a point of departure (pp. 145–146). These two terms "old thinking" and "new thinking" correspond to the essentialist and non-essentialist conceptions of culture, respectively. Basically, the old or the essentialist views regard culture as a monolithic static discrete entity, which can be described in terms of the "authentic" elements that represent it. In this respect, culture is seen as an active and dynamic system that gains its significance through the activities its group members engage in. It follows that having individuals align themselves to different cultural systems, and therefore having multiple identities, can be understood as the norm rather than the exception (Gee, 2011).

In recent years, Foreign Language (FL) educators have reached a consensus: Culture needs to be a part of FL teaching (Lange & Klee, 2000). In fact, FL classes may present a unique potential for strengthening intercultural education by teaching not only the language but also the culture in which it is embedded (Singerman, 1996). Learning about another culture is a fundamental goal in the FL classroom. If language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the core of FL instruction because "a second or foreign language can rarely be taught or learned without addressing the culture of the community in which it is used" (Hinkel, 1999, p. 2). It is a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process which engages the learner cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively" (Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, & Colby, 2000, p. 50).

The issue of culture has become so crucial to the language curriculum that despite its elusive and complex nature various professional associations have made significant efforts to establish standards for the teaching and learning of culture (Goals, 2000). However, less research has been done with regard to the effect of using audio-visual materials as a way to enhance learners' cultural awareness in the FL classroom.

Moreover, as stated by Web (2010), using FL videos in the classroom can promote incidental vocabulary learning through repeated encounters with unknown words. It is still less obvious how to foster incidental vocabulary learning, and as Schmitt (2008) points out, the need for learning programs to include not only explicit vocabulary teaching but also to promote incidental learning is, indeed, necessary. Incidental

learning takes place when the learner is reading or listening to “normal language use” (Nation, 2001) without actively and consciously engaging in the actual learning process by, for example, watching a FL movie.

Authentic videos put language into an extremely authentic context, especially when backed-up by proper follow-up activities. Watching videos, language learners witness language in action. It is especially useful in EFL situations where learners rarely have the opportunity to use their L2 for real purposes. Videos are also a great source to boost learners’ pronunciation, stress and intonation patterns, all of which can help to better learn words. Enriched with contextual clues, videos are able to easily trigger the background knowledge of the learners, which in turn, puts learners in a much stronger position to analyze the situation. Unlike through explicit teaching and learning, the actual process of learning happens subconsciously and mainly simply from the context. Hence, in line with other immersion models of learning, the more frequent the exposure or the more frequent the encounters are to the words in the context, the greater the chances are for learning to take place.

However, some studies suggested that using videos as an instructional tool has some disadvantages too (e.g., Caspi, Gorsky, & Privman, 2005; Fisch, 2000). Despite the arguments for and against its potential to help L2 learners acquire the target language and the inconclusive findings across studies, the field is still waiting for more conclusive answers. Eventually, it remains an empirical question whether watching FL videos can lead to incidental vocabulary learning. The study reported below intended to address this point by examining the effect of watching FL video on Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ incidental vocabulary learning. Moreover, this study aimed to examine Iranian EFL learners’ attitudes towards watching FL video in their English language classroom.

As noted above, the videos appear to be an excellent use of technology to convey contemporary cultural information using the target language. They provide immediate access to images and to native speakers of the target language for students. In spite of this abundance of authentic audio-visual materials, other researchers (e.g., Chun & Plass, 2000; Lively, Harper & Williams, 1998) question their effectiveness and argue that they might in fact not foster cultural acquisition. Lively et al. (1998) suggest that the “very essence of the input text being imbued with native culture is what makes accessing the language in authentic documents so difficult for students” (p. 82). They urged teachers using videos to intervene or “mediate” the activity by providing students with support for new vocabulary, grammar, and cultural information embedded in the video. Chun and Plass (2000) included cognitive overload among the potential disadvantages of the hypermedia environment.

In addition to the effect of videos on cultural awareness, they may also offer the same potential for incidental vocabulary learning as written text through repeated encounters with unknown words (Web, 2010). Books provide L2 written input and movies provide L2 aural input. The principle known as the “multimedia principle” states, “people learn more deeply from words and pictures than from words alone” (Mayer, 2005). Most of the research investigating incidental learning has looked at the

phenomenon through reading. Relatively little research has been carried out on incidental learning through listening; more specifically, on the extent to which learners can benefit from watching movies and TV shows. One of the most recent studies by Webb and Rodgers (2009) indicated that “materials which provide visual and aural input such as movies may be conducive to incidental vocabulary learning” (p. 412).

The other indisputable advantage of videos is that they build up motivation in the learners especially when selected properly in accordance with the age and interest of the learners. Moreover, when introducing technological materials to the classroom context, it may be beneficial to explore learners’ attitudes. That is, positive attitudes of learners, or users, play a crucial role and contribute to the successful implementation and utilization of technological materials (Manochehri & Sharif, 2010; Venkatesh et al., 2002). Additionally, Rosenberg (2001) claims that in order to develop an effective e-learning environment it is necessary to chart learners’ attitudes, such as their motivations, distractions, frustrations or dislikes. Thus, in this research project, a questionnaire survey was used in order to prompt participants to express their attitudes and opinions in relation to watching the FL videos they experienced for this research.

Overall, as in Iranian context, where students learn a language to perform it, learning a foreign culture can be seen as the process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures. It seems that if Iranian EFL learners have the opportunity to learn about FL culture through video clips they would be engaged in the learning process cognitively, behaviorally, and affectively. Audio-visual materials can stimulate Iranian EFL learners’ motivation towards learning the FL. One main problem is that Iranian EFL learners do not have enough exposure to FL culture (Tavakkoli & Moradishad 2014). Looking through this lens, watching videos can be an excellent medium to learn about FL culture because they take the learner to the heart of the target culture. However, very little classroom research documents that FL video actually enhances cultural awareness. Therefore, the current research attempted to fill this gap by investigating the effect of watching FL videos on Iranian EFL learners’ cultural awareness.

In addition to cultural awareness, watching FL videos in the classroom can be helpful because Iranian students are exposed to up-to-date linguistic resources of the FL country. In fact, less research appear to be investigating incidental vocabulary learning through watching videos while there is a vast wealth of research examining the effects of reading and listening on incidental vocabulary learning. This is surprising because English language videos are extremely popular among Iranian EFL students, and videos are a valuable source of L2 aural input in most EFL contexts like Iran, where there are limited opportunities for L2 exposure. Investigating the potential of videos on incidental vocabulary learning may offer valuable knowledge to foster L2 video vocabulary acquisition. Thus, the other aim of the current study was to shed light on the question of whether watching FL videos can promote EFL students’ incidental vocabulary learning.

The following research questions were investigated in the current study.

**RQ1.** Does watching FL videos have any effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' cultural awareness?

**RQ2.** Does watching FL videos have any effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' incidental vocabulary learning?

Based on the aforementioned issues, the following hypotheses were formulated.

**H<sub>01</sub>.** Watching FL videos does not have any effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' cultural awareness.

**H<sub>02</sub>.** Watching FL videos does not have any effect on Iranian EFL intermediate learners' incidental vocabulary learning.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

Seventy male intermediate EFL learners with the age ranges from 16 to 28, participated in the current research. The proficiency level of the participants (i.e., intermediate level) was determined by an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) before carrying out the treatment. Two intact classes, taught by the same instructor, were considered as the two groups of the study. There were 35 participants in each of the experimental and control groups. The experimental group (N = 35) watched the FL videos during five sessions and the control group (N = 35) did not have an opportunity to watch the FL videos and had their normal class.

### **Instruments**

#### ***Oxford Placement Test (OPT)***

As an indicator to identify intermediate level learners, the results of an OPT was used. The test contained 60 multiple choice items of grammar (20 items), vocabulary (20 items), reading comprehension (20 items). A multiple-choice test format was considered to be appropriate for Iranian learners who had much experience taking tests in a similar format during formal schooling. Also, OPT was selected because it was easy to administer and easy to score objectively. Moreover, the test has been pretested and validated by more than 19,000 students across 60 countries. Thus, the selection of this multiple-choice test seemed to be reasonable and suitable for this study.

#### ***English Language Videos***

Five episodes of the TED (**T**echnology, **E**ntertainment, and **D**esign) talks were selected for the purpose of this study (see Appendix B). TED Talks are freely available English language video presentations. The content of TED talks used to relate primarily to the topics of technology, education and design but more recent TED talks relate to a diverse

variety of topics. The videos were selected from 9-10 minute talks given by inspirational leaders.

TED videos were chosen because they were freely available online and under the creative commons license, which allowed anyone to "reproduce, distribute, display or perform publicly the TED Talks" (TED Conferences LLC, 2015), making them suitable for use in institutional settings. In addition, TED talks are given by professional native speakers that have a clear structure for their speeches and use appropriate vocabularies which make these videos suitable for the purpose of this study. Moreover, the criterion for choosing TED videos was based on the length and difficulty level of the speeches. Shorter videos (i.e., not more than 10 minutes) were chosen in order to deal with the time limitation of the classroom. Besides, attempts were made to choose the videos which fit the participants' proficiency level i.e., the intermediate level.

The following five TED talks were chosen for the purpose of this study:

- How to grow a forest in your backyard (duration = 9:11)
- Five dangerous things you should let your kids do (duration = 9:18)
- How to speak so that people want to listen (duration = 9:58)
- This is what happens when you reply to spam email (duration = 9:48)
- Leather and meat without killing animals (duration = 9:02)

### ***Peterson Cultural Awareness Test (PCAT)***

The Peterson Cultural Awareness Test (PCAT), developed by Peterson (1997), is a 50-item test. The PCAT addresses 24 themes which represent core issues relating to culture which are widely accepted by numerous practitioners, theoretical writers, and empirical researchers. As mentioned on the PCAT website by the early-2000s, over 15,000 people from a wide variety of countries had completed the tool.

Since the test uses Likert scales, the responses will always fall between "0" and "10". Arriving at a score for the PCAT requires step by step analysis based on the manual provided by Brooks Peterson. The final scores are in a format of percentages.

### ***Target Vocabulary***

Following Marefat and Hassanzadeh (2014), to identify the target words, certain vocabulary items that are presumed to be unfamiliar to learners were extracted from the videos based on their frequency of occurrence in the videos and also their level. Then, the items were administered through a pilot test to 25 students of the same language proficiency who did not belong to the experiment. They were requested to put a checkmark beside the words whose meanings were known to them and provide a translation or definition for them. Items with no checkmark were the prime candidates for the experiment. These target words were brought to our groups later in the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale.

### ***Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS)***

A Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) was developed based on the model given by Wesche and Paribakht (1996). The VKS was used as pre- and post-tests for the two groups. The scoring guidelines are presented. In order to investigate the reliability of the VKS, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was calculated, the results of which indicated that the reliability of this test was acceptable value of .83.

The VKS combines assessment of both perceived knowledge and demonstrated knowledge. The VKS utilized in this research contains 30 vocabularies (6 words extracted from each of the FL videos) and theoretical ranges of the scale are from 30 to 150. It required the participants to self-report their level of familiarity with a particular word on a scale of five levels. Additionally, the upper three levels (3, 4, 5) required the participants to provide evidence of the reported knowledge by either writing either the L1 translation of the word (3, 4), or an L2 sentence using the word in context (5).

## Procedures

All the data were collected over an 8-week period in two classes at Hakim private language institute in Isfahan during the spring semester of 2016. The study was conducted in two English classes that met two times each week (each 1.5 hours). Before the experiment, the participants were informed that all details of the procedures would be confidential and their tests would not be graded as part of their academic achievement.

During the study all of the conditions were the same for the experimental and control groups except for the treatment in the experimental group (i.e., watching the FL videos). Both groups were taught by one teacher who used the exact same syllabus, coursework, and the same textbook (*New Headway: Intermediate Student's Book*.)

The participants in two intact classes were considered as the experimental group (N= 35) and the control group (N = 35). In the first week, to determine the participants' level of proficiency, the OPT was administered and intermediate-level learners were selected according to the OPT manual. In the second week, the participants in both groups were asked to take the pretests of cultural awareness and L2 vocabulary in a normal classroom setting over the scheduled class periods.

The third to seventh meetings were treatment sessions. During these five sessions, participants in the experimental group watched the assigned video in each session while, the students in the control group had their normal class without watching any videos. It should be noted that there are 5 treatment sessions because the experiment was done in normal class periods and the researcher was allowed by the institute principal to use not more than five sessions. As indicated earlier, care was taken so as to have similar conditions for both groups, such as: same instructor, assignment, syllabus, and textbook. The only difference was that the participants in the experimental group watched the assigned FL video in 5 sessions but the students in the control group did not watch any FL videos.

Once all the five sessions were covered, both groups were asked to take two follow-up tests, i.e., the cultural awareness and the vocabulary tests, in the eighth meeting. Additionally, the attitude questionnaire was distributed to the participants in the experimental group only as they had experienced watching the videos.

## Data analysis

To address the first research question, scores from the pretest and posttest administration of CAI in each of the groups were subjected to a series of Paired samples t-tests in order to examine within group differences. Also, Independent samples t-tests were run to investigate between-group differences. Afterwards, in order to determine if watching FL video had any effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' incidental vocabulary learning, Paired samples t-tests together with independent samples t-tests were used on the VKS scores.

## RESULTS

### The effect of watching FL videos on learners' cultural awareness

In order to investigate the first research hypothesis, two independent samples t-tests were computed across the two groups to examine between-group differences. Afterwards, paired samples t-tests were conducted in order to investigate the improvements from pretest to posttest within each group. The minimum alpha for confirmation of the research hypothesis was .05.

The Descriptive statistics of the cultural awareness scores for the experimental and control groups at pretest and posttest periods are demonstrated in Table 1. Additionally, t-tests results are demonstrated in Table 2.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of the cultural awareness scores

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre_Cultural Awareness	Experimental	35	46.09	13.318	2.251
	Control	35	47.29	13.239	2.238
Post_Cultural Awareness	Experimental	35	63.71	16.426	2.776
	Control	35	48.49	14.304	2.418

As shown in Table 1, the pretest mean score of the control group ( $M = 47.29$ ) is slightly higher than that of the experimental group ( $M = 46.09$ ). Concerning the posttests, the mean score of the experimental group ( $M = 63.71$ ) is greater than the control group ( $M = 48.49$ ). In addition, Table 1 depicts that the scores improved from pretest to posttest in both groups, although this improvement is marginal in the control group. To establish whether the differences between the two groups were statistically significant independent samples t-tests were run in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Independent samples t-tests of the cultural awareness scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
										Lower	Upper
Pre_Cultural Awareness	Equal variances assumed	.028	.869	-.378	68	.707	-1.200	3.174	-7.534	5.134	
	Equal variances not assumed			-.378	67.998	.707	-1.200	3.174	-7.534	5.134	
Post_Cultural Awareness	Equal variances assumed	2.150	.147	4.136	68	.000	15.229	3.682	7.882	22.575	
	Equal variances not assumed			4.136	66.740	.000	15.229	3.682	7.879	22.578	

T-test results, reported in Table 2, reveal that there is not any statistically significant difference between the two groups in the pretests,  $t(68) = -.378$ ,  $p = .707$ . To be significant, the Sig. value needs to be .05 or smaller. In this case the value of .707 is bigger than the alpha value of .05, so we can conclude that our result is not significant with respect to the pretest scores.

In addition, Table 2 demonstrates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in the posttests,  $t(68) = 4.136$ ,  $p = .000$ . In this case the value of .000 is smaller than the alpha value of .05. This finding suggests that the participants in the experimental group significantly outperformed the participants in the control group at the posttest.

Yet, within-group differences should also be examined before jumping to any conclusions. Subsequently, paired samples t-tests are calculated to investigate the development of the scores from pretest to posttest within each group.

Paired samples t-tests in Table 3 reveals that the cultural awareness scores of the experimental group significantly improved from pretest to posttest  $t(34) = -10.368$ ,  $p = .000$ . However, this Table 3 shows that there is not any statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores in the control group,  $t(34) = -1.658$ ,  $p = .107$ . These results suggested that watching FL videos had a significant effect on the development of cultural awareness scores in the posttest.

**Table 3.** Paired samples t-tests of the cultural awareness scores

Group		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Experimental	Pre_Cultural Awareness - Post_Cultural Awareness	-17.629	10.059	1.700	-21.084	-14.173	-10.36	34	.000
Control	Pre_Cultural Awareness - Post_Cultural Awareness	-1.200	4.283	.724	-2.671	.271	-1.65	34	.107

Therefore, the obtained results with regard to the effect of FL videos on cultural awareness indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group at the posttest. Additionally, within-group analyses showed that watching the FL videos led to significant developments from pretest to posttest scores of cultural awareness. Consequently, the first null hypothesis predicting that Watching FL videos does not have any effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' cultural awareness was rejected.

### The effect of watching FL videos on learners' incidental vocabulary learning

The second research question sought to examine the effect of watching FL videos on EFL learners' incidental vocabulary learning. As in the previous section, between-group and within-group analyses were performed in order to investigate the second research hypothesis. That is, independent samples t-tests followed by paired samples t-tests were conducted on vocabulary knowledge pretest and posttest scores.

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the vocabulary scores on the two testing periods across the two experimental and control groups.

**Table 4.** Descriptive statistics of the vocabulary knowledge scores

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre_Vocabulary Knowledge	Experimental	35	75.49	22.245	3.760
	Control	35	76.57	23.504	3.973
Post_Vocabulary Knowledge	Experimental	35	92.26	24.428	4.129
	Control	35	79.09	25.111	4.244

As presented in Table 4, the pretest mean score of the experimental group ( $M = 75.49$ ) is marginally smaller than that of the control group ( $M = 76.57$ ). In addition, the posttest mean of the experimental group ( $M = 92.26$ ) is larger than the control group ( $M = 79.09$ ). In addition, there is a general growth in the mean scores from pretests to posttests in both groups. In order to see whether the differences are statistically significant, independent samples t-tests are run on the vocabulary scores across the groups.

**Table 5.** Independent samples t-tests of the vocabulary knowledge scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pre_Vocabulary Knowledge	Equal variances assumed	.105	.747	-.198	68	.843	-1.086	5.470	-12.001	9.830
	Equal variances not assumed			-.198	67.795	.843	-1.086	5.470	-12.002	9.830
Post_Vocabulary Knowledge	Equal variances assumed	.023	.880	2.224	68	.029	13.171	5.922	1.355	24.988
	Equal variances not assumed			2.224	67.948	.029	13.171	5.922	1.355	24.988

Table 5 shows no statistically significant differences between the two groups regarding their scores of the pretests,  $t(68) = -.198$ ,  $p = .843$ . Moreover, comparing the scores of the groups on the posttests via the independent samples t-test in Table 5, significant differences can be observed between the groups at the posttest,  $t(68) = 2.224$ ,  $p = .029$ . That is, the vocabulary knowledge of the participants who watched FL videos was significantly better than the control group at the time of post-testing.

In the second phase of analysis, within-group differences are investigated. Thus, to examine the development of the students' vocabulary scores from pretest to posttest, paired samples t-tests are run within each group.

**Table 6.** Paired samples t-tests of the vocabulary knowledge scores

Group		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Experimental	Pre_Vocabulary Knowledge - Post_Vocabulary Knowledge	-16.771	4.863	.822	-18.442	15.101	20.402	34	.000
Control	Pre_Vocabulary Knowledge - Post_Vocabulary Knowledge	-2.514	12.299	2.079	-6.739	1.710	-1.209	34	.235

The results of paired samples t-tests, shows that the small improvement in the scores of the control group, could not reach significance,  $t(34) = -1.209, p = .235$ . However, the findings presented in Table 8 uncovers that there are significant improvements made by the experimental group from pretest to posttest,  $t(34) = -20.402, p = 000$ . That is, the treatments had a positive effect on the development of students' incidental vocabulary learning as shown by the development of the scores from pretest to posttest.

In short, based on the obtained findings, deductions can be made that the students who watched FL videos in the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group as far as the vocabulary posttests are concerned. Moreover, the participants in the experimental group could significantly improve their vocabulary knowledge scores from pretest to posttest. That is, watching FL videos had a positive effect on the learners' incidental vocabulary learning. Consequently, the second null hypothesis as watching FL videos does not have any effect on Iranian EFL intermediate learners' incidental vocabulary learning was rejected.

## DISCUSSION

### The effect of watching FL videos on learners' cultural awareness

The findings of the first question revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group at the posttest. Additionally, within-group analyses showed that watching the FL videos led to significant developments from pretest to posttest scores of cultural awareness. The results for cultural awareness are in agreement with the findings of by (Dubreil, 2002; Herron & Hanley, 1992; Hanley et al., 1995; Herron, et al., 1999; Herron et al., 2000, Zhang, 2011; Wang, 2016) that the cultural knowledge of language students improved significantly after watching FL videos. On the contrary, the results run counters to Adair-Hauck et al. (2002) to some degree.

Results of the study by Dubreil (2002) indicate that intermediate-level college French students do improve their French and Francophone cultural knowledge over the course of a semester in a curriculum with an accompanying journalistic-style video. Moreover, Herron and Hanley (1992) have used video as an advance organizer to introduce children to a foreign culture. The children that had been exposed to the video prior to reading the text learned significantly more culture than the children that were in the text-only condition.

Zhang (2011) provides an example for teaching Chinese cultural perspectives through discourse from film clips. It shows how students can be taught differences, alternatives, and critical language and cultural awareness using comparative, reflective, and interpretive methodologies. The results Wang (2016) indicates that most Chinese college students agreed that using feature films in English learning can improve their cultural awareness, pronunciation, English life understanding, and appreciation of filming arts

Results can also support the findings obtained by Martinez-Gibson (1998) who reported that FL students were able to recognize cultural content of FL commercials when

combined with cultural discussion activities before and after viewing the video. She suggested that the visual aspect of television commercials aids the students' comprehension and awareness of cultural information. It should be noted that the generalizability of these findings is somewhat limited as commercials are a very specific genre of video and make-up a relatively small part of a FL instructional curriculum.

On the contrary, the fact that the watching FL videos in the present study led to the development of cultural awareness conflicts with earlier research by Adair-Hauck et al. (2000) who reported the findings of a classroom study in which they assessed the power of technology to improve beginning FL students' cultural knowledge. Subjects were a part of a technology-enriched language learning program that included computerized reading and grammar programs, and a video component. The video presented brief scenarios performed by native speakers in metropolitan France and in Guadeloupe. They found that there was no significant difference between the two groups in average cultural gain made over the semester.

One plausible explanation would be that Adair-Hauck et al. (2000) examined the effect of a technology-enriched language learning program that included computerized reading and grammar programs; while, our study investigated the role of watching video components alone. A more plausible explanation would be that that participants in the current study were all intermediate Iranian EFL learners; whereas, the aforementioned study used learners with beginning levels of proficiency.

All in all, from the discussion of the obtained findings regarding cultural awareness, it can be concluded that watching FL videos is an effective and suitable technique to be used for improving EFL learners' cultural awareness.

### **The effect of watching FL videos on learners' incidental vocabulary learning**

Results regarding the second research question indicated that the participants who watched FL videos in the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group as far as the vocabulary posttests are concerned. Moreover, the participants in the experimental group could significantly improve their vocabulary knowledge scores from pretest to posttest. That is, watching FL videos had a positive effect on the learners' incidental vocabulary learning.

This result is consistent with the findings from previous studies (e.g., Csomay & Petrović, 2012; Khiyabani et al., 2014; Lin, 2010; Marefat & Hassanzadeh (2014); Rusanganwa, 2013; Web, 2010) which found that vocabulary achievement would be higher when video materials were used. Csomay and Petrović (2012) investigated the extent to which watching discipline-related movies and TV shows in a second/foreign language may facilitate incidental learning of technical vocabulary. The findings suggested that the potential for incidental vocabulary learning through movies and TV shows with a legal content is high and that these media could also be used for teaching language patterns in an English for Specific Purposes classroom with relevant focus. In

an Iranian context, Khiyabani et al. (2014) found that using multimedia was more effective in acquisition and retention of unknown vocabulary than traditional methods.

In addition, Lin (2010) revealed positive effects of using video together with text in computers for different proficiency groups' incidental vocabulary learning. Their study also provided further evidence for Smidt and Hegelheimer's (2004) perspective that incidental vocabulary acquisition occurs through involvement in the CALL activity. In another Iranian study, Marefat and Hassanzadeh (2014) found that the audiovisual context is likely to establish stronger mnemonic bonds than any other variety of input. Their results indicated that the effects of the videos on the learners' incidental word gains lasted longer than the other two modes during the delayed recall as well. This is indicative of the positive impact of this medium on the learners' short-term and perhaps long-term memory.

Likewise, Rusanganwa (2013) studied a group of physics undergraduates in Rwanda to see the effect of multimedia on technical vocabulary learning. He reported that the effect of multimedia on the acquisition of the vocabularies was large. However, Web (2010) provided evidence that watching a single movie would have very little value as an incidental vocabulary learning activity. He also concluded that regular viewing of movies over a long period of time has great potential for incidental vocabulary learning. His results showed that as the number of movies analyzed increased, the number of times that low frequency word families were encountered also increased.

In contrast, our significant result with regard to the effect of watching FL videos on vocabulary learning is not in line with Zarei and Gilanian (2013) and Raine (2012) which showed the disadvantages of video as an instructional tool. For example, Zarei and Gilanian (2013) investigated the effect of various multimedia modes on L2 vocabulary comprehension and production. The same movie was presented to each group with different combinations of multimedia: the first group received video, audio, and captions, the second group were presented with video and captions, and the third group received video and audio. At the end of the experimental period, the participants received vocabulary comprehension and production posttests. Two separate one-way ANOVA procedures were used to analyze the obtained data. The results indicated no significant differences among the effects of various multimedia combinations on L2 vocabulary comprehension and production.

One explanation given by Zarei and Gilanian (2013) for the unexpected finding was that the students needed more time to accommodate themselves to their related stimulus condition of multimedia instruction. They mentioned that another cause might have been related to having opportunity to take the movie backward and forward, which might lead to confusion.

## CONCLUSION

As discussed in the preceding section, findings of the current study indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group at the posttest. Additionally,

within-group analyses showed that watching the FL videos led to significant developments from pretest to posttest scores of cultural awareness. As a result, it is concluded that cultural awareness of language students can improve significantly after watching FL videos. Besides, from the discussion of the obtained findings regarding cultural awareness, it can be concluded that watching FL videos is an effective and suitable technique to be used for improving Iranian EFL learners' cultural awareness.

Additionally, results indicated that the participants who watched FL videos in the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group as far as the vocabulary posttests are concerned. Moreover, the participants in the experimental group could significantly improve their vocabulary knowledge scores from pretest to posttest. Therefore, deductions can be made that watching FL videos can promote EFL learners' incidental vocabulary learning.

The findings of the current study encourage teachers to enhance the cultural aspect in EFL classes by using a curriculum that includes an authentic video component. This issue is especially important for teachers in light of our findings that the participants had a positive attitude towards using FL videos in the classroom. Based on empirical findings, it is suggested that instructors take advantage of students' interest in video and use it as an effective tool in the classroom.

Based on the results of this study, some suggestions are provided for the researchers who are interested in conducting collaborative writing research. A logical future research topic is to replicate this study in a different culture and compare the model results to those in this study. Moreover, whereas result of the current study provides evidence that incidental vocabulary learning may occur through watching FL videos, it does not indicate the extent to which it may occur. Therefore, future researchers are suggested to consider taking a more detailed and comprehensive approach to vocabulary evaluation and look more closely at improvements to find out extent to which FL videos can be effective.

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