

An investigation into three different techniques to raise critical cultural awareness

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Abstract

This study attempted to explore to what extent each of the three techniques of culture narratives, culture capsules and culture training activities significantly affect the critical cultural awareness of Iranian EFL learners by comparing their means from pretest to post-test questionnaire after ten-session treatment. Furthermore, it investigated whether there were any differences in the effectiveness of these techniques. Regarding the participants, the testing group was 154 undergraduate English language translation students, including both male and female students, forming three experimental groups. This investigation used the quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design. The sampling method was convenience sampling. The homogeneity test and a pre-post critical cultural awareness questionnaire were used to collect data. The collected data were analyzed through Repeated Measures ANOVA and Simple Effect Analysis. Based on the obtained results, there were significant differences between the pretest and the post-test, which means that by applying the techniques mentioned above, the critical cultural awareness of learners increased. Also, there were significant differences between the three groups' overall means on pre-post critical cultural awareness questionnaires. Considering the three groups, culture narratives, culture capsule and culture training activities, the former outperforms the others. Furthermore, between culture training activities and culture capsule groups, the culture training activities group performed better than the culture capsule group.

Keywords: Critical Cultural Awareness; Culture Capsule; Culture Narratives; Culture Training Activities; Language Learning

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1. Introduction

In 1971, Lado defined *culture* as systematic and shared behaviour patterns with a specific meaning. Culture in language learning and teaching is often described pragmatically as a culture associated with learning a language. Cultural learning should be seen only partially as a set of inactive, factual information but as a dynamic and continuing process. Cultural learning has cognitive, behavioural and affective dimensions. Moreover, they differ according to “gender, age, ethnicity, race, education, power, income, religion, region, and other social and geographic variables; and that cultural patterns can change over time” (Byram & Grundy, 2002, p. 193).

Nunan and Choi (2010) comment that culture is not one worldview shared by all the members of a national speech community; it is “multifarious, changing, and, more often than not, conflictual” (p. 2). Furthermore, culture has always been a part of language teaching. Over the past few decades, there has been a growing concern about integrating culture and language teaching (Kramersch, 1995). Concurrently, the global increase of the English language has given rise to the importance of the topic.

In addition, critical cultural awareness is defined as “an ability to evaluate, critically and based on explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (Byram, 1997, p. 63). Critical cultural awareness appears more than cultural awareness when the language’s nature, depth and sensitivity as knowledge are considered. According to Byram (1997), when foreign language learners’ acquisition is improved by critical cultural awareness (CCA), the students have the capability and skills to join the target societies as they enjoy a profound knowledge of cultural awareness.

Critical cultural awareness is thoroughly connected to improving critical thinking skills that let language users judge the experiences and behaviors they face (Byram, 2009). Moreover, he emphasizes that critical thinking should focus on one’s culture and other cultures and that critical thinking results from a comparative concurrence of the specific aspects of different cultures. In other words, advancing people’s cultural awareness leads them to more critical thinking (Chakir, 2006).

Equally important, it has questioned principal views in applied linguistics regarding the relationships between languages and cultures. Global English use challenges the predetermined relationship between a language and culture and previous debates on foreign language teaching and the importance of cultural awareness in language learning, as there are complex and dynamic relations between languages and cultures.

Furthermore, because of growing internationalization, learning a foreign or second language is not merely considered an academic study but concentrates more on learning how to communicate. Real communication in the real world occurs in a context, and culture is an inseparable part of context; as a result, communication cannot happen in a culture-free context (Kramersch, 1993).

For example, in business, the trend toward globalization has led to the reality that many organizations have to communicate and do business with representatives from other companies with different languages and cultures so that challenges may arise. These businesses supposed that it is crucial to pay attention to raising cultural awareness in the process of doing their job to avoid possible cultural misunderstandings (Smirnova, 2023).

Moreover, cultural awareness training is more comprehensive than language education. For example, it is common for health professionals in various sectors to expand cross-cultural clinical meets and patient consequences with the wider expectancy of decreasing health inequalities (Shepherd, 2019).

In general, many research studies prove that integrating and teaching learning strategies can be beneficial; for example, the results of the study conducted by Rasouli et al. (2020) showed that applying teaching learning strategies in adult learning programs is successful. They proved that using these strategies could increase competence. Therefore, instructors can include teaching culture and critical culture in teaching learning-strategy programs.

Likewise, the learner's native culture and the target culture or the culture in which meaning is communicated affect the potential interpretation of meanings. This context is not only a first or target language culture; both concurrently exist and can be instantaneously engaged. Learning to communicate through a second language involves developing an awareness of how culture interrelates with language whenever used (Liddicoat et al., as cited in Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009). Moreover, Vourdanou (2017) reported that presenting cultural components in English language learning classrooms leads to emerging questions by the students about their own cultures and manners and makes them sympathetic to cultural dissimilarities.

As language-teaching specialists encounter the challenge of integrating culture in their instructional practice nowadays, this study might help educators explore their cultural beliefs and develop skills to create opportunities to create cultural materials, techniques and activities in the context of the second language acquisition to increase critical cultural awareness.

This study examined three different techniques to improve critical cultural awareness: culture narratives, culture capsules, and culture training activities. It analyzed their effect and possible differences to enhance critical cultural awareness. These techniques can be easily applied to classrooms and included in materials and language syllabi.

Considering the above-mentioned techniques, in the first place, there are culture narratives. In the past three years, narratives and, especially, stories people tell about their lives have become the focus of the interdisciplinary field of narrative study, which proposes narrative as the dominant tool by which people offer their lives sense. Consequently, narratives have gained increasing importance outside literature and folklore, becoming a rich data source in several areas of linguistics, particularly L1 acquisition, linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, and language education. Moreover, a narrative study has also received increased attention in TESOL and second language acquisition (Pavlenko, 2002).

On the same line, Clark and Rossiter (2008) hold the view that using narratives is developing. In the field of education, and more specifically, adult education, it has begun recently. Adult educators always use stories to teach. What is more recent is the conceiving of how we learn through narrative. Human beings tell stories, which serve a function, namely, to "make meaning of our experience" (p. 62). This knowledge has been established by several theorists who claim "meaning-making is a narrative process" (p. 63). Besides, the narrative is how we build our sense of self and our identity: "Personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one's life; they are how identities may be fashioned" (p. 64).

Also, Johnson and Golombe (2011) maintain that from a Vygotskian socio-cultural theoretical perspective, the transformative power of narrative lies in its ability to awaken cognitive processes that promote development. In fact, the products of narrative activities are working as a tool for knowledge building. Fivush (2010) also states that cultural narratives can define lives and selves.

Moreover, narratives in a classroom environment can be in the form of plays, poems, stories, and the like. These narratives have the potential to contribute significantly to the language-learning field. Narrative as a learning tool is relatively common in language education. They can raise student learning. For example, reading and writing autobiographic narratives often inspire learners to value their knowledge, which is essential and can empower them (Nelson, 2011).

Also, Pauly (2003) categorizes art images as a culture narrative or visual culture. Students can negotiate meanings by connecting images with culture narratives that help them understand cultural knowledge. Investigations also demonstrate that telling life stories in a new second language may be an excellent tool of empowerment that makes it possible to tell new selves and needs previously considered untellable. Recent research strongly determines that narratives are not merely individual productions but also are strongly formed by "social, cultural, and historical conventions as well as by the relationship between the storyteller and the interlocutor (Pavlenko, 2002, p. 215).

Likewise, people have started to talk and write about their experiences in recent years. These memoirs can be considered culture narratives that can be used as a tool in the second language acquisition environment. For example, Taniguchi (2010), in his article, told his story of the experiences of an Asian as a minority in English-speaking societies.

In this study, the researcher used published narratives from groups of interests. In the second place, there were culture capsules. Taylor and Sorenson (1961) defined a culture capsule as a short, 5 to 10-minute activity that presents one aspect of culture and focuses on minimal variations between the learners' native culture and the second culture. Culture capsules are one of the greatest and most famous techniques for teaching culture. A culture capsule is a short description or depiction of one or some chosen features of the second language culture, such as meals, wedding customs and greetings. An instructor can also incorporate and compare this new information with the learners' first language culture.

Besides, Knop (1976) mentioned that using culture capsules has several advantages, including accomplishing short-range goals. They can be presented once at a time. They are tangible learning experiences that learners mostly like and enjoy. Besides, they help learners develop a general perception and understand cultural differences. Culture capsules can prevent culture shock when learners face unfamiliar experiences. Moreover, they can decrease stereotypes and bias, and finally, as they are short, they can be included in daily classroom activities. In this research, culture capsules were PowerPoint culture facts presented in culture capsule group classes once at a time; they included culture tips like greeting, the importance of family, pets, superstitions, body language, and the like. The instructor directly compared and contrasted these tips in different cultures, including the target and first language cultures.

In the third place, there are culture training activities. These activities are an educative process that promotes intercultural learning by acquiring behavioural, cognitive, and affective competencies required for effective communication across different cultures (Morris & Robie, 2001). Furthermore, culture training activities focus on mutually exchanging ideas and cultural norms and developing heartfelt relationships. In an intercultural environment, nobody is left unchanged as everyone learns from one another and improves together. Moreover, they attempt to promote intercultural education in its three aspects: knowledge, skills and attitude. Culture training activities include different techniques such as readings, films, simulations, games, and culture grams that language teachers can use to develop cultural knowledge and help the acculturation process. At the same time, it can promote communication in a socio-cultural setting (Chastain, 1988). In this investigation, in culture training activities group, PowerPoint-based lectures, writing summaries, games, and role-plays were used.

Regarding games, neuroscientists believe that "when the fun stops, learning often stops too" (Willis, 2007, p. 2). Moreover, the research in second language acquisition (SLA) demonstrates the potential power and effectiveness of games for language and culture learning in vocabulary, pragmatics, literacy, and multilingual engagement (Reinhardt & Thorne, 2020). Therefore, the connection between games and language learning is a productive ground for pedagogical purposes. Since the beginning, the game has been central to human culture (Huizinga, as cited in Dubreil, 2020). He argues that games may even precede culture. Therefore, investigating a specific culture through its games could provide valuable insights into gaining intercultural competence. When people started to create civilizations and societies, the plays they invented and developed shaped their culture and played a prominent role in creating the social framework. Games occupy a privileged space in human societies and are used to interpret the world around us.

According to Liu and Ding (2009), role-play is an effective technique to change the teaching and learning conditions, provoking students' interests and curiosities. Applying role-play in classrooms can make language learning distinguished, and much research focuses on applying it successfully and taking the most advantage of it in language learning classes. Liu and Ding (2009) argue that there are four critical factors for its success: "the topic chosen should be real and relevant; the teachers need 'feed-in' the appropriate language; correct errors in a proper

An investigation into three different techniques to raise critical... way; some of teachers role are facilitator, spectator or participant” (p. 140). Including role-play in classroom activities may add diversity, change the learning pace, and offer language production opportunities.

In line with the research conducted in this regard so far, the present study involves Iranian English translation university students, in which the learners’ critical cultural awareness is challenged and developed by applying different techniques, using culture narratives, culture capsules, and culture training activities.

Considering the importance of the relationship between language learning and culture, numerous studies have been carried out, and various techniques have been proposed (e.g., Allen, 2004; Baker, 2011; Byram, 2012; Byram & Kramsch, 2008; Holme, 2003; Kramsch, 1995; Littrell & Salas, 2005; Nelson, 2011; Pavlenko, 2002; Schulz, 2007 & Tomlinson, 2000). However, the study conducted by Birjandi and Meshkat (2003) showed that the implemented cultural values in books do not influence the learners and do not enter their cultural systems. Books alone do not have the power to offer and internalize the target culture. So, we must use innovative techniques to teach culture and raise cultural awareness. For example, the researcher used three techniques in this study to compare their probable effects: culture narratives, culture capsules and culture training activities.

Critical cultural awareness is regarded as the students’ need in the current globalized world, and it is a cornerstone of many research studies like Chwo’s (2023) study.

This study examined new cultural awareness-focused English course materials (SPROUT project). He supported using these materials for class and self/home study and considered teaching cultural awareness a successful practice.

Moreover, other studies explored methods to enhance critical cultural awareness. For example, the findings of the survey conducted by Eren (2021) suggest that telecollaboration significantly increased pre-service teachers’ critical cultural awareness and decreased biases in multicultural learning settings.

Another study by Öztürk and Gonca (2022) investigated critical cultural awareness development in a transnational virtual exchange project. The teacher candidates from Turkey attended a virtual exchange project via gatherings and interacted with other teachers from Germany and other countries. They collaboratively attempted to solve assigned tasks and challenges to develop the final solution. At the end of the course, the qualitative analysis revealed that the teachers’ critical cultural awareness was significantly developed.

However, the studies that have been conducted so far need to cover the comparison between the different techniques. Moreover, this investigation is almost exceptional in the context of Iran. What is accustomed in Iran is either disregarding the culture or offering it through very limited culture capsules or similar traditional approaches. Innovative methods are often viewed with doubt. Details of the issue are often ignored. Moreover, the available studies and techniques still need to provide a clear-cut method for instructors to integrate culture into their programs.

As mentioned earlier, there are few quantitative studies on this issue in Iran so that the present research may bring insight into second language acquisition. It may foster cultural awareness more conscientiously (Birjandi & Meshkat, 2003). Furthermore, the present research may enhance teachers’ critical cultural awareness by providing practical tools to deal with cultural problems and raise critical cultural awareness in their classrooms.

On the whole, reviewing the related literature on the significance of culture in language learning reveals that although many educational studies have emphasized the powerful influences of critical cultural understanding on language learning, only a few have focused on practical aspects of foreign language learning. Based on the indicated shortcomings, this study aims to provide necessary information for language teachers and learners to construct a functional and critical awareness of the target language and its culture to increase critical cultural awareness. Moreover, the present study attempts to compare the possible effects of using three techniques: culture narratives, culture capsules and culture training activities like PowerPoint-based lectures, written assignments, role-play, games, and open-ended questions.

If the target language is taught without considering the culture, meaningless expressions or expressions with the wrong meaning will be taught. Students who receive cultural education can deal with foreign concepts more effortlessly (Ajami & Nasser, 2019). Ultimately, the following major and minor research questions were recognized:

Major research question: Does using different techniques to develop critical cultural awareness significantly affect raising critical cultural awareness of Iranian EFL learners?

Minor research question 1: Does using culture capsules significantly affect the development of Iranian EFL learners' critical cultural awareness?

Minor research question 2: Does using culture narratives significantly affect the development of Iranian EFL learners' critical cultural awareness?

Minor research question 3: Does using culture training activities significantly affect the development of Iranian EFL learners' cultural awareness?

Minor research question 4: Is there any statistically significant difference between culture capsules, culture narratives and culture training activities on the development of Iranian EFL learners' cultural awareness?

Though this study did not claim to offer ultimate responses to all questions and concerns, investigating three potentially helpful techniques could be beneficial to incorporating culture into the process of second or foreign language learning.

2. Methodology

This study analyzed how instructors could improve critical cultural awareness by applying three techniques. More specifically, this study was undertaken to achieve the following two objectives. First, it explored to what extent the three techniques of culture narratives, culture capsules and culture training activities improved their means from the pretest to the post-test. Second, it investigated the difference between the three techniques of culture narratives, culture capsules, and culture training activities on improving Iranian EFL learners' critical cultural awareness. This investigation used the quasi-experimental pretest-post-test design. The collected data were analyzed through Repeated Measures ANOVA and Simple Effect Analysis.

Additionally, the participant learners were 154 B.A. English translation students were studying at Islamic Azad University, Shahr-e-Qods and Islamshahr Branches. They attended Advanced Communication classes. Table 1 shows the frequencies and percentages for the participant's gender and age. 64.28 percent of the 154 students were female, while 35.72 percent were male. In addition, most participants, i.e. 62.34 %, were less than 20 years old; 30.25 percent aged between 21 to 25; and 7.14 percent were 26 years old or older.

Table 1. Demographic Information

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	55	35.72
	Female	99	64.28
	Total	154	100.0
Age	< 20	96	62.34
	21-25	47	30.52
	>26	11	7.14
	Total	154	100.0

Before starting the experiment, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administered to form a homogenized sample. Based on the participants' performance, the OPT test results were used to ensure homogeneous groups. Then, participants were assigned into three experimental groups. Three groups were formed from seven intact classes: three classes from Shahr-e-Qods University, which formed a culture training activity group, and four classes from Islamshahr University, which formed a culture capsule and culture narrative groups. Subsequently, the three groups received three different treatments and specific assessments. The sampling procedure was convenience sampling.

Subsequently, an experiment was conducted to compare the possible effects of using culture narratives, culture capsules and culture training activities. To this end, the three experimental groups' final scores were measured to find the difference in the students' answers to the questionnaire or performance after a ten-session classroom treatment. The data collected in this study was analyzed through Repeated Measures ANOVA and Simple Effect Analysis.

The researcher used three instruments to carry out the present study: an Oxford Placement Test, a Pre-project Questionnaire and a Post-project Questionnaire.

In order to measure and determine the participants' general English proficiency level, exclude extreme ones and ensure their homogeneity, they were required to take the standard OPT test, which helps to determine the test-takers' English level quickly and accurately. This test evaluates grammar and use of English.

After the OPT test, the participants completed a pre-project critical cultural awareness questionnaire. This questionnaire was developed by Atai et al. (2017) and piloted with 370 Iranian participants. This questionnaire has three components and 37 items: (1) 'CCA in ELT Programs' including 20 items; (2) 'CCA in ELT Textbooks and Materials' including 13 items; and (3) 'CCA in General Terms' including four items. Five specialists in applied linguistics, as well as eleven experienced EFL teachers, review this instrument. They were asked to mark items whose wording could be enhanced, whose meaning was unclear, and whose existence was needless (Dörnyei, as cited in Atai et al. 2017). The reliability index of this instrument was calculated, which was Cronbach $\alpha = .75$. Moreover, factor analysis was run to determine the construct validity of this scale. The questionnaire assessed knowledge, skills, and attitude through a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

After two pretests, the participants received ten-session treatment. Each group received its predesigned specific treatment based on three strategies to raise critical cultural awareness. After completing the course, participants completed the critical cultural awareness post-project questionnaire.

3. Results and Discussion

This study was undertaken in order to achieve the following two objectives. First, it explored to what extent each of the three techniques of culture narratives, culture capsules and culture training activities significantly improved their means from the pretest to the post-test. Second, it investigated the effects of the techniques of culture narratives, culture capsules and culture training activities on improving Iranian EFL learners' critical cultural awareness. The data collected in this study were analyzed through Repeated Measures ANOVA and Simple Effect Analysis.

Table 2 shows the skewness and kurtosis indices of normality. Since all values were within the ranges of ± 2 , it was concluded that the normality assumption was retained. It should be noted that the criteria of ± 2 were proposed by Bachman (2005), Bae and Bachman (2010) and George and Mallery (2020). It should also be noted that Zhu et al. (2019) suggested the criteria of ± 3 .

Table 2. *Skewness and Kurtosis Indices of Normality*

Group		N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Capsules	PreCCA	50	.309	.337	-.929	.662
	PostCCA	50	.024	.337	-.280	.662
Narrative	PreCCA	49	.342	.340	-.850	.668
	PostCCA	49	-.014	.340	-.662	.668
Activities	PreCCA	55	.205	.322	-.781	.634
	PostCCA	55	-.010	.322	-.283	.634

Note. OPT = Oxford Placement Test, Pre = Pretest, Post = Posttest, and CCA = Critical Cultural Awareness.

3.1. Reliability Estimates

Table 3 shows Cronbach's alpha reliability indices for the pre-test and the post-test of critical cultural awareness. The pre-test and the post-test of critical cultural awareness enjoyed reliability indices of .971 and .972. The reliability indices for the pre-test and post-test of critical cultural awareness was considered appropriate, as noted by Tseng et al. (2006), Dörnyei & Taguchi (2009), Fryer et al. (2018) and Harrison et al. (2021), who believed that a Cronbach's alpha value of .70 is the adequate reliability index for an instrument. However, George and Mallery (2020, p. 244) believe that "there is no set interpretation as to what is an acceptable alpha value. A rule of thumb that applies to most situations is; >.9 excellent, >.8 good, >.7 acceptable, >.6 questionable, >.5 poor and <.5 unacceptable". Based on these criteria, it was concluded that the pre-test and post-test of critical cultural awareness enjoyed excellent, i.e. $\geq .90$ reliability indices.

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Pretest	.971	37
Posttest	.972	37

3.2. Exploring the major and minor research questions

The major research question asks whether using different techniques to develop critical cultural awareness significantly affects raising critical cultural awareness of Iranian EFL learners. The four minor research questions related to the main question probed each group's mean improvement from the pretest to the posttest and their differences through Simple Effect Analysis. Before discussing the results, the assumptions related to Repeated Measures ANOVA will be reported.

Repeated measures ANOVA, besides the assumption of normality, which was explored in Table 2, has three more assumptions: Homogeneity of variances of groups, sphericity, and homogeneity of covariance matrices. Table 4 displays the results of Levene's tests of homogeneity of variances. The non-significant results of the test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was retained on the pretest ($F(2, 151) = .443, p > .05$) and posttest ($F(2, 151) = 2.44, p < .05$) of critical cultural awareness.

Table 4. Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Pretest and Posttest of Critical Cultural Awareness

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pretest	Based on Mean	.371	2	151	.691
	Based on Median	.443	2	151	.643
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.443	2	150.180	.643
	Based on trimmed mean	.387	2	151	.680
Posttest	Based on Mean	2.441	2	151	.091
	Based on Median	2.448	2	151	.090
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.448	2	143.791	.090
	Based on trimmed mean	2.432	2	151	.091

Repeated Measures ANOVA also requires that the correlation between pretest and posttest of critical cultural awareness be roughly equal across the three groups, i.e. homogeneity of covariance matrices. This assumption was explored through the Box's test. The non-significant results of the Box's test (Box's $M = 7.11, p > .001$) (Table 5). It should be noted that the results of the Box's test should be reported at .001 levels; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2014; Pallant, 2016; and Field, 2018.

Table 5. Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices for Critical Cultural Awareness

Box's M	7.110
F	1.162
df1	6
df2	533352.603
Sig.	.323

Furthermore, repeated measures ANOVA assumes that the differences between pairs of dependent variables should have equal variances across the groups, i.e., Mauchly's test of sphericity. At least three dependent variables are required to test this assumption. Since this study included two dependent variables only, a pretest and a posttest of critical cultural awareness, the degree of freedom was zero. Consequently, the sphericity test could not compute the p-value (Table 6).

Table 6. *Mauchly's Test of Sphericity for Critical Cultural Awareness*

Within Effect	Subjects	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Epsilon		
						Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
Tests		1.000	.000	0	.	1.000	1.000	1.000

The main results of Repeated Measures ANOVA will be discussed below. Table 7 and Table 8 show the Between-Subjects and Within-Subjects Effects results. These two tables should be reported despite their results not answering any of the research questions. Simple effect analysis will answer the first major null hypothesis and its three minor null hypotheses (Tables 10, 11, and 12). Based on the results shown in Table 4.6 ($F(1, 151) = 6.49, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .079$ representing a moderate effect size), it can be concluded that there were significant differences between the three groups' overall means on the pre-test and the post-test. In other words, if one computes the sum of the pre-test and the post-test of critical cultural awareness, there will be significant differences between the three groups' means of the total score.

Table 7

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Overall Pretest and Posttest of Critical Cultural Awareness by Groups

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	2067286.448	1	2067286.448	3157.856	.000	.954
Group	8497.802	2	4248.901	6.490	.002	.079
Error	98851.968	151	654.649			

Table 8 shows the results of the Within-Subjects Effects that include two F-values. First, the significant results of the F-value for the effect of Tests ($F(1, 151) = 66.66, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .306$ representing a large effect size) indicated that if one compares the total sample's means on pretest and posttest of critical cultural awareness, disregarding the three groups, there will be a significant difference between the two overall means. Furthermore, finally, the results indicated that there was a significant interaction between Group and Tests ($F(2, 151) = 7.03, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .085$ representing a moderate effect size). It should be reiterated again that these results couldn't be used to answer any of the research questions.

It should be noted that Table 8 has produced four F-values for each of variable. All these F-values are the same due to the fact that the assumption of sphericity was retained. As shown in Table 6, the epsilon values of one indicated that no correction would be applied to table 8.

Table 8. *F-values*

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Tests	Sphericity Assumed	46984.389	1	46984.389	66.664	.000	.306
	Greenhouse-Geisser	46984.389	1.000	46984.389	66.664	.000	.306
	Huynh-Feldt	46984.389	1.000	46984.389	66.664	.000	.306
	Lower-bound	46984.389	1.000	46984.389	66.664	.000	.306
Tests * Group	Sphericity Assumed	9910.625	2	4955.312	7.031	.001	.085
	Greenhouse-Geisser	9910.625	2.000	4955.312	7.031	.001	.085
	Huynh-Feldt	9910.625	2.000	4955.312	7.031	.001	.085
	Lower-bound	9910.625	2.000	4955.312	7.031	.001	.085

	Sphericity Assumed	106423.508	151	704.791
Error	Greenhouse-Geisser	106423.508	151.000	704.791
(Tests)	Huynh-Feldt	106423.508	151.000	704.791
	Lower-bound	106423.508	151.000	704.791

Table 9 reveals the three groups' means on the pre-test and post-test of critical cultural awareness. The three groups had roughly equal means on the pre-test of critical cultural awareness. However, the culture narratives group ($M = 106.85$) had the highest mean on the post-test of critical cultural awareness. This was followed by culture training activities ($M = 95.85$) and culture capsules ($M = 80.48$) groups).

Table 9. *Descriptive Statistics for Pretest and Posttest of Critical Cultural Awareness by Groups*

Group	Time	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Capsules	Pretest	71.640	3.536	64.653	78.627
	Posttest	80.480	3.832	72.909	88.051
Narratives	Pretest	71.224	3.572	64.167	78.282
	Posttest	106.857	3.871	99.209	114.505
Activities	Pretest	66.127	3.372	59.466	72.789
	Posttest	95.855	3.654	88.636	103.073

After discussing the results of the Between-Subjects and Within-Subjects Effects, the results of simple effect analysis will be reported. Simple effect analysis, as defined by Field (2018), enables researchers to investigate the levels of one variable within another variable. The Repeated Measure ANOVA includes two variables: a Time variable, which represents the pretest and post-test of critical cultural awareness, and a Group variable, which shows the three groups, i.e. culture narratives, culture capsules, and culture training activities. Using a simple effect analysis, one can investigate the levels of Time variables across the Group variable and vice versa. Thus, we can make the following comparisons;

A: Each group's mean improvement from the pretest to the post-test was probed.

B: Three groups were compared on the pretest of critical cultural awareness to prove that they were homogenous in terms of their critical cultural awareness prior to administering treatments (Table 10).

C: Three groups were compared on the post-test of critical cultural awareness to probe the first major null hypothesis (Table 11).

D: Finally, each group's mean improvement from the pretest to the post-test was examined to probe the three minor null hypotheses (Table 12). All these results will be discussed based on the means shown in Table 14. The groups' means on the pretest of critical cultural awareness are compared below.

Table 10 shows the results of the Simple-Effect Analysis that compared the three groups' mean improvement from the pretest to the post-test. Based on these results and means shown in Table 9, it can be concluded that:

A: The culture capsules group did not show any significant improvement in their means from the pretest ($M = 71.64$) to the post-test ($M = 80.48$) ($MD = 8.84$, $p > .05$).

B: The culture narrative group had a significant improvement in their mean from the pretest ($M = 71.22$) to the post-test ($M = 106.85$) ($MD = 35.63$, $p < .05$).

C: The culture training activities group had a significant improvement in their mean from the pretest ($M = 66.12$) to the post-test ($M = 95.85$) ($MD = 29.72$, $p < .05$).

Table 10. Simple Effect Analysis for Exploring Mean Improvement From Pretest to Posttest

Group	(I) CCA	(J) CCA	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
CAP	Posttest	Pretest	8.840	5.310	.098	-1.651	19.331
NAR	Posttest	Pretest	35.633*	5.363	.000	25.035	46.230
ACT	Posttest	Pretest	29.727*	5.062	.000	19.725	39.730

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 11 shows the results of the Simple-Effect Analysis which compares the three groups' means on the pre-test of critical cultural awareness. The results indicated that; There was not any significant difference between culture capsules ($M^4 = 71.64$) and culture narratives ($M = 71.22$) on the pre-test of critical cultural awareness ($MD = .416, p > .05$). There was not any significant difference between culture capsules ($M = 71.64$) and culture training activities ($M = 66.12$) on the pre-test of critical cultural awareness ($MD = 5.51, p > .05$). There was not any significant difference between culture narratives ($M = 71.22$) and culture training activities ($M = 66.12$) on the pre-test of critical cultural awareness ($MD = 5.09, p > .05$). Based on these results, it can be concluded that the three groups were homogenous regarding their ability to develop critical cultural awareness before administering the treatments. Figure 4.1 shows the groups' means on the pre-test of critical cultural awareness.

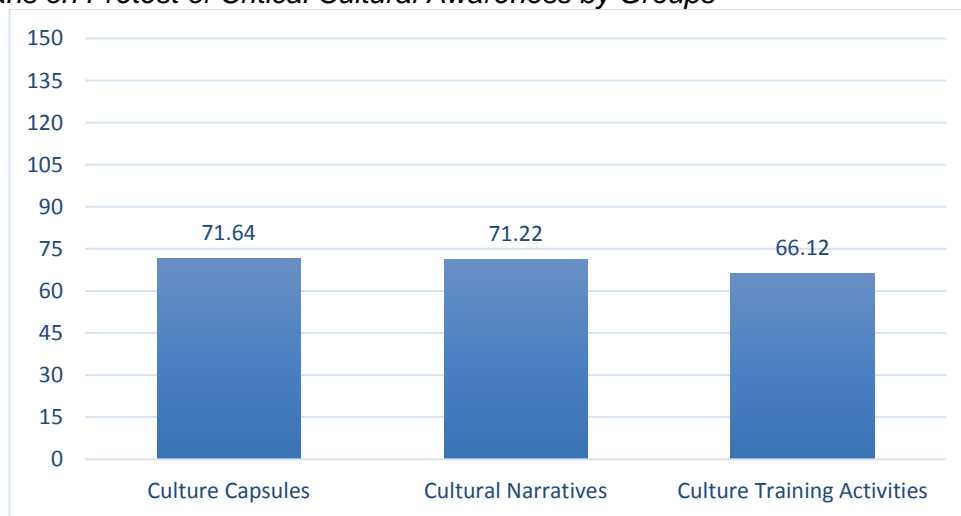
Table 11

Simple Effect Analysis for Comparing Groups on Pretest of Critical Cultural Awareness

Time	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pretest	Capsules	Narratives	.416	5.026	.934	-9.516	10.347
		Activities	5.513	4.886	.261	-4.141	15.166
		Narratives Activities	5.097	4.912	.301	-4.608	14.802

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Figure 1. Means on Pretest of Critical Cultural Awareness by Groups



⁴ M and MD stand for Mean and Mean Difference.

Table 12 depicts the results of the Simple-Effect Analysis which compares the three groups' means on the posttest of critical cultural awareness. These results will probe the first major null hypothesis. The results indicated that;

The culture narratives group (M = 106.85) significantly outperformed the culture capsule group (M = 80.48) on the post-test of critical cultural awareness (MD = 26.37, $p < .05$).

The culture narratives group (M = 106.85) significantly outperformed the culture training activities group (M = 95.85) on the post-test of critical cultural awareness (MD = 11.00, $p < .05$).

The culture training activities group (M = 95.85) significantly outperformed the culture capsules group (M = 80.48) on the post-test of critical cultural awareness (MD = 15.37, $p < .05$).

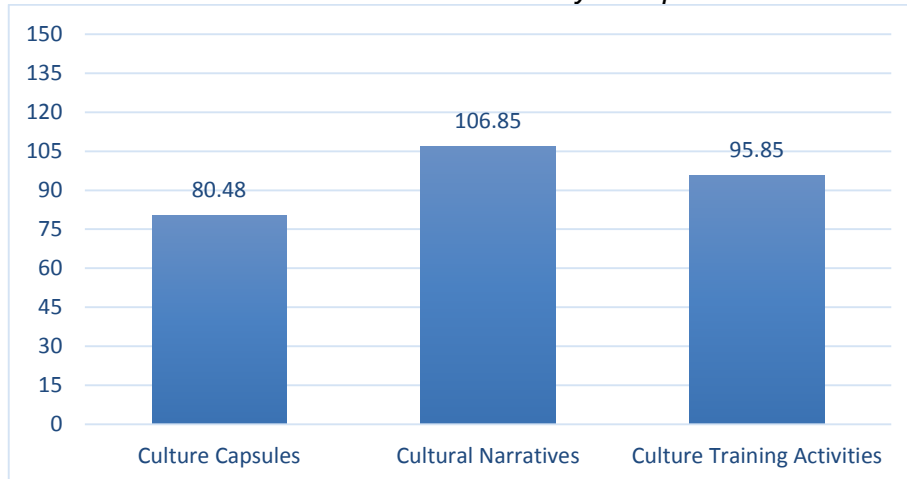
Thus, the major null hypothesis based on major research question, "using different techniques to develop critical cultural awareness did not have any statistically significant effect on rising critical cultural awareness of Iranian EFL learners" was rejected. Figure 4.2 shows the groups' means on the posttest of critical cultural awareness.

Table 12. Simple Effect Analysis for Comparing Groups on Posttest of Critical Cultural Awareness

Time	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Post	Narratives	Capsules	26.377*	5.447	.000	15.615	37.139
		Activities	11.003*	5.323	.040	.486	21.520
	Activities	Capsules	15.375*	5.295	.004	4.913	25.836

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Figure 2. Means on Posttest of Critical Cultural Awareness by Groups



Finally, Table 13 probes each group's mean improvement from the pre-test to the post-test. These results will be employed to probe the three minor null hypotheses based on three minor research questions. The results indicated that:

The culture narrative group had a significantly higher mean on the post-test of critical cultural awareness (M = 71.22) than the pre-test (M = 106.85) (MD = 35.63, $p < .05$). The first minor null-hypothesis as "use of culture narratives as a technique for raising critical cultural awareness did not have any statistically significant effect on the development of critical cultural awareness of Iranian EFL learners" was rejected.

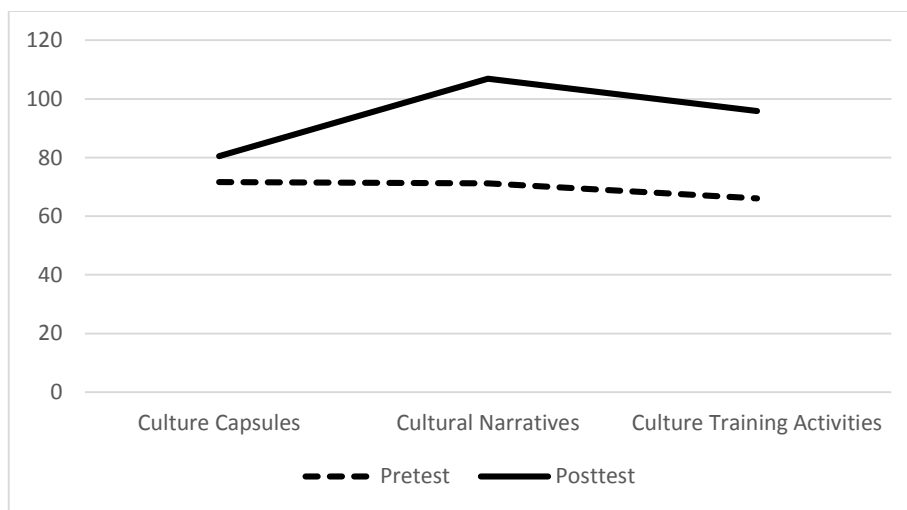
Table 13. Simple Effect Analysis for Comparing Mean Improvement from Pretest to Posttest of Critical Cultural Awareness

Group	(I) Time	(J) Time	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Capsules	Posttest	Pretest	8.840	5.310	.098	-1.651	19.331
Narratives	Posttest	Pretest	35.633 [*]	5.363	.000	25.035	46.230
Activities	Posttest	Pretest	29.727 [*]	5.062	.000	19.725	39.730

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Although the culture capsules group had a higher mean on the post-test of critical cultural awareness ($M = 80.48$) than pre-test ($M = 71.64$), their improvement from the pre-test to the post-test was not statistically significant ($MD = 8.84$, $p > .05$). The second minor null-hypothesis as “use of culture capsules as a technique for raising critical cultural awareness did not have any statistically significant effect on the development of critical cultural awareness of Iranian EFL learners” was supported.

Furthermore, the culture training activities group had a significantly higher mean on the post-test of critical cultural awareness ($M = 95.85$) than the pre-test ($M = 66.12$) ($MD = 29.72$, $p < .05$). The third minor null-hypothesis as “use of culture training activities as a technique for raising critical cultural awareness did not have any statistically significant effect on the development of critical cultural awareness of Iranian EFL learners” was rejected. Figure 4.3 shows the three groups’ mean improvement from the pre-test to the post-test. And finally, as it is shown in Figure 3, the last minor question and its null hypothesis as “there is not any statistically significant difference between using culture capsules, culture narratives and culture training activities on the development of Iranian EFL learners’ cultural awareness” was rejected.

Figure 3. Mean Improvement from Pretest to Posttest of Critical Cultural Awareness by Groups

4. Conclusion

Critical cultural awareness (CCA) must be incorporated into the language-learning curriculum if instructors, material developers, and planners hope to assist learners in developing gratitude for the language and culture and an awareness of their own and target culture. The focus should be on developing skills to create capable, flexible learners who can communicate in real situations.

In Asian countries, including Iran, non-native speakers have taken most intercultural communication through English as a lingua franca. Consequently, understanding cultural context seems necessary. Learning English is not just learning linguistic knowledge; if we want successful communication, we must know how to interact and equip teachers and learners with critical cultural awareness. In other words, we should enhance our understanding of both native culture and target

culture and the ability to compare and contrast two cultures without judgment (Nguyen, 2023).

As a result, the close relationship between developing critical cultural awareness and its impact on language learning needs more attention. Teachers and students are the actual beneficiaries of including critical cultural awareness techniques in the language learning curriculum. In order to fill the gaps between the theoretical aspect of critical cultural awareness and its real pedagogical implications in the classroom setting, it is advantageous to present planners, instructional material developers, practitioners, and teachers with an insight into including these techniques in their instructional materials and classroom procedure. However, many more techniques regarding their effectiveness and practicality remain to be examined.

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