

Effect of interactionist dynamic assessment on English vocabulary learning: Cultural perspectives in focus

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The present study sought to investigate if an interactionist dynamic assessment differently affects the English vocabulary learning of Iranian EFL male and female learners with different cultural dimensions. Initially, 120 adult EFL intermediate learners were selected using convenience sampling from among 15 such classes. A cultural dimension questionnaire was given to the participants to identify their cultural orientations. After identifying the cultural orientations of the learners, The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) proposed by Wesche and Paribakht (1993) was translated into Persian and learners were asked to rate the vocabulary items in a 100 vocabulary list based on the scale. The rationale behind this procedure was to select the vocabulary items that learners were not familiar with. Based on VKS, the learners selected 40 vocabulary items. Ten sessions were determined for teaching these 40 selected words to all the learners using the interactionist dynamic assessment. After the end of the treatment, a 40-item vocabulary test devised by the researchers was administered to the groups to test their vocabulary learning performance. The results of statistical analyses indicated that male learners with individualism/collectivism cultural orientation significantly outperformed all the other male learners in other culturally oriented groups. Likewise, female learners with individualism/collectivism cultural orientation significantly outperformed all the other female learners in other culturally oriented groups. Based on the findings of the present study, teachers are encouraged to take learners' cultural orientations into account when providing dynamic assessment.

Introduction

Learning a second language requires extensive practice on various language components including vocabulary. A review of some recent studies (e.g., Agustín-Llach, 2015; Alipour, Madarsara, Youhanaee & Barati, 2015; Arast, & Gorjian, 2016; Ertürk, 2016; Ghanbari, & Marzban, 2014) shows that vocabulary is of high significance in the language learning process. Vocabulary acquisition is at the heart of second language learning because meanings are mainly embedded in the vocabulary items. According to Ertürk (2016), vocabulary includes the building blocks of a language and learners start learning a second language by initially learning its vocabulary. With regard to the approaches to vocabulary learning, most studies have dealt with incidental versus intentional vocabulary learning, and also with implicit versus explicit vocabulary learning. In addition, literature on vocabulary acquisition has highlighted the role of memory, attention, and awareness in learning vocabulary and proposed techniques such as mnemonic, flash cards, and word web for learning L2 (second language) vocabulary items. However, what seems lacking in L2 vocabulary literature is how vocabulary assessment may contribute to vocabulary learning. Assessment discussions in L2 vocabulary learning have revolved around assessing vocabulary size, assessing vocabulary in contexts, and how vocabulary

assessment may help to diagnose learners' vocabulary needs (Read, 2007). Therefore, the present study aims to shed more light on the role of assessment in vocabulary acquisition.

Assessment can be considered as an integral component in almost all educational contexts (Naeini, 2013; Naeini & Duvall, 2012) as it is one of the most important elements concerning the students' experience of education and all the benefits it has for them (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). As many scholars (e.g., Taras, 2013; Yilmaz, 2016) have maintained, educational assessment is regarded an integral component in the learning process. Thus, assessment has so far been explored in the international (e.g., Ableeva, 2008; Antón, 2009; Davin, 2011; Garb & Kozulin, 2002; Lantolf & Poehner, 2011; Poehner, 2008; Swain, 2000; Xiaoxiao & Yan, 2010) and local contexts of ELT in Iran (e.g., Ghahremani & Azarizad, 2013; Isavi, 2012; Pishghadam, Barabadi & Kamrood, 2011; Sadeghi & Khanahmadi, 2011; Saeidi & Hosseinpour, 2013; Zoghi & Malmeer, 2013).

Language testing paradigms have been responsive to changes in language teaching methods. English teaching reforms in recent decades have aimed at shifting the teaching paradigm from the traditional "teacher-centred" pattern to a "student-centred" trend, by taking students' individual differences, needs, and cognition patterns into account. Conventional tests view future as a simple extension of the past (Valsiner, 2001), and as a gatekeeping tool, sorting individuals into predetermined categories of pass/fail or accept/reject (Shohamy, 1999, 2001). The most important paradigm shift in testing was a movement from product-oriented testing to process-oriented assessment, that is, from static assessment (SA) to dynamic assessment (DA). As traditional assessment, concerned with the products of learning, does not provide prescriptive information for designing potentially effective instruction, researchers have moved from SA to DA or at least have supplemented SA with a DA-orientated approach (Bransford, Delclos, Vye, Burns & Hasselbring, 1987).

One of the ways which might help students overcome learning challenges they encounter might be selection of the best type of assessment. In this respect, dynamic assessment seems to offer fruitful results. According to Lidz and Gindis (2003), dynamic assessment refers to a type of approach for finding out individual differences and their contributions to teaching and learning that ultimately leads to intervention via the assessment procedure. In the same vein, Haywood and Lidz (2007) asserted that dynamic assessment is "an interactive approach to conducting assessments ... that focuses on the ability of the learner to respond to intervention" (p. 1).

DA is viewed beneficial for any individual student (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004). It has emerged from theoretical assumptions about human adaptive properties of cognition, learners' capability level, and developmental nature of learning (Nazari & Mansouri 2014). While SA provides teachers with a single score showing the actual development level of learners, DA offers new insights into assessment by revealing what the student can learn from the interaction with a teacher or a more competent peer and provides prospective predictions of their possible future development. According to Vygotsky (1978), what the student is able to do without assistance demonstrates his/her past development, while

what he/she is capable of doing with mediation provides insights into his/her future development. As Lantolf and Poehner (2008) pointed out, DA merges assessment and instruction into a single dynamic activity including the simultaneous diagnosis and mediation required by the learner, in order to bring to light the existing problems and help learners overcome them. DA normally tries to support the teaching and learning process, through the provision of individualised assistance during testing.

Dynamic assessment is subsumed under learning-oriented assessment types as a type of assessment where the primary focus is on the potential to enhance more efficient learning (Hernandez, 2012). An important feature of learning-oriented assessment is the extent to which assessment tasks and activities lead to stimulating appropriate student learning behaviours, with a particular focus on the learning process rather than the product (James, 2014). In this approach to assessment, there is no separation between assessment and teaching, while teaching, learning and assessment are different parameters which are interwoven and presumably bring about more effective learning (Sadler, 2010). Dynamic assessment is process-oriented in that it motivates interaction; and draws on zone of proximal development (ZPD) theory, turning assessment into a type of instruction with emphasis on what a learner has acquired and learned so far. Based on ZPD, learning occurs when there is approximation in learning through a gradual and progressive process of learning knowledge. Dynamic assessment is also future-oriented in that it searches the person's potentialities for more learning. One of the main types of dynamic assessment is *interactionist DA* which is the focus of the current study.

The interactionist format, or “train-within-test design”, provides students with mediation in the form of hints, prompts and instruction, sequenced from the most implicit to the most explicit (Shabani, 2012) or from general to specific (Wang, 2010). “Interactionist dynamic assessment is based on Vygotsky's emphasis on cooperative dialoging. In this approach, help comes from the interaction between the mediator and the learner” (Grigorenko, 2009, p. 38). On the other hand, interventionist DA, or “test-train-test design”, embeds the intervention in a separate session between pre-and post-assessment like a sandwich (Khoshsima & Izadi, 2014).

However, discussions of instruction and assessment should occur within the milieu of cultural settings. Culture has numerous aspects as evident in the definition of culture by Brown (2007). Brown defined culture as a group of the beliefs, conceptualisations, values, skills, and arts, setting a group of people apart from other groups in a given period of time. The current study focused on the power relations within cultures by studying how power relations interact with the effect of dynamic assessment on vocabulary learning. In other words, the need to know how power is conceptualised is an important part of culture, playing a significant role in culturally relevant goals (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010), and language learning goals are not exceptions.

Cultures are characterised by constructions of power, which affect both the roles of individuals as well as their relationships to one another. These roles and relationships play an important role in educational settings for both L2 learners and EFL instructors. In the same vein, Breen (2001) maintained that social relationships in the classroom contribute

to the organisation of what is learned, how learning unfolds, and what we achieve. According to Hofstede (1997), in communities where there is a small power distance, everyone expects teachers to treat the learners as equals, given that the educational process is student-centred. However, education in societies with large power distances tends to be teacher-centred, as people expect teachers to outline the intellectual paths for learners to follow (Hofstede, 1997).

Notions of collectivism and individualism within societies reflect the amount of integration in societies. Collectivist cultures are viewed as societies which are tightly integrated. In contrast, individualist cultures are characterised as societies which are loosely integrated (Hofstede, 1986). In individualist societies, every person is expected to assume responsibility both for themselves and their family. In such cultures, education is aimed at preparing each person for achieving a status in a society among other individuals. The learning is intended to focus more on knowing how to learn than knowing how to do (Hofstede, 1997). In contrast, in collectivist societies a great importance is attached to tradition as well as whatever is rooted in tradition. The notions of collectivism and individualism have implications for classroom environments. In a collectivist culture, learners are expected to be the recipients of knowledge from a more knowledgeable person (e.g., teacher) while in individualist cultures, learners are seen as autonomous people having the right to explore and learn freely. Such orientations in collectivist cultures may contradict with interactionist dynamic assessment which requires active participation of learners in interaction and feedback processes. Learners with individualistic orientations may benefit from interactionist dynamic assessment because such learners are more ready for exploration and individual involvement.

As the previous literature indicates, no study, to the best knowledge of the present researchers, has explored the effect of interactionist dynamic assessment on vocabulary learning of male and female learners with different cultural dimensions. Thus, the present study, in an attempt to fill the gap in the literature, sought to examine the following research questions:

1. Does interactionist dynamic assessment differently affect the vocabulary learning of male learners with different cultural dimensions?
2. Does interactionist dynamic assessment differently affect the vocabulary learning of female learners with different cultural dimensions?

Method

The present study was a quantitative study employing between-groups design. In other words, groups of learners with different cultural orientations and gender were compared quantitatively in terms of their vocabulary learning. What follows is a description of the participants of the study, instrumentation, data collection and analysis procedure.

Participants

At the outset, 120 adult EFL intermediate learners in Gonabad, a city in the mid-east of Iran, were selected based on convenience sampling from among 15 such classes at a private English institute. They were mainly university students who hoped to find better jobs by achieving higher degrees in their professional fields. The age range was 18 to 30, comprising 65 females and 55 males, all with Persian as their native language. These learners had all passed their previous English courses at the institute. The courses offered to the participants covered the major language skills (reading, speaking, listening and writing) and components (vocabulary and grammar). The vocabulary items included in the course were embedded in the reading content and were usually practised through gap filling and matching exercises along with occasional multiple choice items. To enter the courses of the institute, learners have to take a placement test (Oxford Placement Test). Following their placement test, the learners will have to attend the classes and pass the final exams given to them after each course. The course book used in this study was *Touchstone 3* (McCarthy, McCarten & Sandiford, 2008). This book contains 12 units, each unit with four parts, A, B, C and D. The following activities are in each unit:

- Extensive speaking, pronunciation and vocabulary sections;
- Thorough grammar sections with clear examples and practice;
- Comprehensive listening activities with scripts;
- Contemporary, engaging reading materials taken from authentic sources;
- And finally, the review and practice pages for each unit, which bring all the learning activities in particular grammatical points together.

Instrumentation

Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS)

Paribakht and Wesche (1993, p.4) proposed five levels or stages in the acquisition of individual words in their vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS). The VKS scale rating varies from total unfamiliarity through the recognition of the word and some idea of its meaning to the ability to use the word with grammatical and semantic accuracy in a sentence. These five levels include:

1. I do not remember having seen this word before.
2. I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.
3. I have seen this word before, and I think it means _____ (synonym or antonym).
4. I know this word. It means _____ (synonym or antonym).
5. I can use this word in a sentence: _____.

VKS was used as a criterion to select those vocabulary items that learners were unfamiliar with. To this end, 100 vocabulary items chosen from ten units of *Vocabulary in Use* was given to the learners and they were asked to assign numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 to the vocabulary items. The five criteria in (VKS) were translated to Persian to minimise

chances of ambiguity in this respect. Also, the first researcher monitored the learners while doing the activity to assure that they were on the right track. Finally, based on the ratings of the students, forty vocabulary items were chosen based on which treatment was carried out. The vocabulary items were those that the learners rated 1 or 2 on the VKS. In other words, the included vocabulary items were those the learners had the least familiarity with, as the first and second levels of the VKS scale were “1. I do not remember having seen this word before”, and “2. I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means.”

Vocabulary test

To test the subjects' vocabulary knowledge after the treatment, we used a vocabulary test devised by the teacher researcher. To this end, the 40 vocabulary items which had been rated 1 or 2 by the participants based on VKS were included in the test. In order to assure validity and reliability of the tests the following procedures were taken.

Validity

The content validity of the test was ensured via appeal to expert opinion. The initial pool of test items was reviewed by an MA and a PhD holder in TEFL with 15 years of teaching experience and some items were revised. Following that, the construct validity of the test was assessed through the employment of a “differential experiment” procedure proposed by Brown (2007). According to this procedure, the construct validity of a measurement instrument could be assessed by administering it to two different groups having obviously different abilities with respect to the instrument's intended purpose. If the difference between the performances of the two groups proves to be statistically significant, it could be concluded that the measurement instrument is assessing what it is supposed to measure and hence has construct validity. The tests were administered to two different groups of learners, upper-intermediate and advanced students. The scores obtained by the groups were analysed using an independent samples t-test. The analysis indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the results with advanced outperforming upper-intermediate, hence, the test was judged to be valid.

Reliability

Test-retest procedures were drawn on to assure the reliability of the test. The test was run twice on the upper-intermediate participants with a time interval of 15 days and a Pearson correlation formula was used, the results of which showed an acceptable reliability index of .82.

The Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 test was also used to further confirm the internal consistency of the test. This statistical test checks the internal consistency of instruments with dichotomous choices. The test statistic is:

$$\rho_{KR20} = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{j=1}^k p_j q_j}{\sigma^2} \right)$$

where

k = number of questions

p_j = number of people in the sample who answered question j correctly

q_j = number of people in the sample who didn't answer question j correctly

σ^2 = variance of the total test scores of all the people taking the test

To this end, the reliability of the vocabulary test turned out to be .86, which is a satisfactory level (Brown, 2007).

Intermediate vocabulary in use

English Vocabulary in Use is a family of self-study and classroom texts for vocabulary development. The books follow the successful format of the *English Grammar in Use* titles with presentation of new vocabulary on the left-hand pages and practice exercises on the facing right-hand pages. This book contains one hundred units covering vocabulary on different topics, e.g., sightseeing, hotel, airport, crime, family members, etc.

Cultural Dimensions Questionnaire

The cultural dimension questionnaire developed by Saboori, Pishghadam, Fatemi and Ghonsooley (2015) was used in the present study. It has 26 items on a 4-point Likert scale which measures 6 dimensions of culture including:

- Power distance (Items: 8, 12, 14, 15)
- Individualism/ collectivism (Items: 3, 9, 13, 16, 17)
- Masculinity/ femininity (Items: 10, 19, 23, 24, 25)
- Uncertainty avoidance (Items: 2, 5, 6, 26)
- Long/short term orientation (Items: 1, 4, 7, 11)
- Indulgence/ restraint (Items: 18, 20, 21, 22).

As stated by Saboori et al. (2015) the instrument enjoys a satisfactory level of validity and reliability. This instrument was given to the participants and the scores of learners for each component were rank ordered and then those learners who scored above 10, 12, 12, 10, 10 and 10 for the dimensions Power distance, Individualism/ collectivism, Masculinity/ femininity, Uncertainty avoidance, Long/short term orientation, Indulgence/ restraint respectively, were considered to be oriented towards that dimension more.

Procedure

Initially, 120 adult EFL intermediate learners at Shokuh Language Institute in Gonabad were selected based on convenience sampling from among 15 such classes. The cultural dimension questionnaire was given to the participants to identify their cultural orientations. The number of participants along with their cultural orientations are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of participants and their cultural orientations

Cultural dimension	Male	Female
Power distance	7	11
Individualism/collectivism	9	9
Masculinity/ femininity	8	13
Uncertainty avoidance	14	15
Long-short term orientation	8	7
Indulgence restraint	9	10

After identifying the cultural orientations of the learners, the VKS proposed by Wesche and Paribakht (1993) was translated into Persian and learners were asked to rate the vocabulary items in a 100 vocabulary list based on the scale. The rationale behind this procedure was to select the vocabulary items that learners were not familiar with. Since the students' familiarity with the words would distort the effect of dynamic assessment, the following procedures were adopted for the purposes of the study. First, 40 vocabulary items were chosen. The vocabulary items were those that the participants rated 1 or 2 on the VKS; 1 meaning "I do not remember having seen this word before" and 2 meaning "I have seen this word before, but I do not know what it means".

Ten sessions were determined for teaching these 40 selected words to all the learners. All groups were taught these vocabulary items using the *Vocabulary In Use* book. To this end, the following steps were taken in the experimental group. Initially, the teacher briefed the students on dynamic assessment and provided some examples. Then to administer dynamic assessment, the researcher went through the following 7 stages:

- The 4 vocabulary items corresponding to the unit under instruction - out of the initial 40 words - were written on the board. Learners were first encouraged to guess the meaning of the words based on the context that the teacher provided orally for them.
- The teacher tried to focus the participants' attention on different word parts such as prefixes or suffixes (if there were any) to find the right meaning.
- The instructor asked the students to identify any synonyms or antonyms of new words.
- The learners were asked to work in pairs and use each word in a sentence based on their guesses.
- Four corresponding definitions of the words under instruction were given to the learners in a jumbled manner. The participants were required to match them to the corresponding definitions.
- The answers were checked and students were assisted in comprehending the meaning of the words.
- The students were put into pairs. One student read the definitions and the other one was required to come up with the correct corresponding word. Then they changed role for the next word.

The aforesaid procedures were taken drawing on the ZPD concept of "step by step" learning, which is the concept behind dynamic assessment (Poehner, 2008). Not only the

gradual process outlined above, but also the feedback process between teacher and learners and also between learners were considered aspects of dynamic assessment.

This teaching course was developed in a way so as to fulfil this purpose. That is, the instructor first started with the first step and moved thoroughly to the other stages by the time the participants had been able to learn the words and use them in sentences appropriately. Having finished the 10 sessions in which the 40 unknown words were covered, the 40 item vocabulary test devised by the researchers was administered to the groups to test their vocabulary performance.

Results

The first research question of the present study aimed to discover if the interactionist dynamic assessment differently affects the vocabulary learning of male learners with different cultural dimensions. To find the answer to this research question, a one-way ANOVA was run on the vocabulary scores of the male learners with different cultural dimensions after the treatment. Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics of vocabulary scores for the male participants with different cultural dimensions.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of vocabulary scores for the male participants with different cultural dimensions

Descriptive statistics	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std error	Std dev.	Variance
Male power distance	7	14.0	19.0	16.714	.6061	1.6036	2.571
Male individualism/collectivism	9	18.0	38.0	28.667	2.1667	6.5000	42.250
Male masculinity/femininity	8	16.0	21.0	18.125	.5490	1.5527	2.411
Male uncertainty avoidance	14	8.0	18.0	12.429	.8101	3.0310	9.187
Male long-short term orientation	8	16.0	30.0	19.875	1.5861	4.4861	20.125
Male indulgence restraint	9	14.0	31.0	23.276	1.8333	5.5000	30.250
Valid N (listwise)	7						

Table 3 demonstrates the results of Levene's test for the homogeneity of variances.

Table 3: Results of Levene's test for the homogeneity of variances

Levene statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
3.973	5	49	.724

As can be seen in the Table 3, the sig value equals .724 which is higher than .05 and thus the homogeneity of variances as an assumption of ANOVA is met. Table 4 shows the results of ANOVA run on the vocabulary scores of the male participants with different cultural dimensions.

Table 4: Results of ANOVA run on the vocabulary scores of the male participants with different cultural dimensions

Male vocabulary scores	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	1634.302	5	326.860	18.354	.000
Within groups	872.607	49	17.808		
Total	2506.909	54			

Table 5: Scheffe post hoc test on the vocabulary scores of male learners with different cultural dimensions

Dependent variable: Male vocabulary scores		Mean diff. (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.	95% conf. interval	
(I) Male groups	(J) Male groups				Low. bound	Up. bound
Power distance	Individualism/ collectivism	-11.9524*	2.1267	.000	-19.326	-4.579
	Masculinity/ femininity	-1.4107	2.1841	.995	-8.983	6.162
	Uncertainty avoidance	4.2857	1.9535	.450	-2.488	11.059
	Long short term orientation	-3.1607	2.1841	.833	-10.733	4.412
	Indulgence restraint	-6.2857	2.1267	.142	-13.659	1.088
Individualism/ collectivism	Power distance	11.9524*	2.1267	.000	4.579	19.326
	Masculinity/ femininity	10.5417*	2.0506	.001	3.432	17.651
	Uncertainty avoidance	16.2381*	1.8030	.000	9.987	22.490
	Long short term orientation	8.7917*	2.0506	.007	1.682	15.901
	Indulgence restraint	5.6667	1.9893	.003	-1.231	12.564
Masculinity/ femininity	Power distance	1.4107	2.1841	.995	-6.162	8.983
	Individualism/ collectivism	-10.5417*	2.0506	.001	-17.651	-3.432
	Uncertainty avoidance	5.6964	1.8703	.120	-.788	12.181
	Long short term orientation	-1.7500	2.1100	.983	-9.066	5.566
	Indulgence restraint	-4.8750	2.0506	.357	-11.985	2.235
Uncertainty avoidance	Power distance	-4.2857	1.9535	.450	-11.059	2.488
	Individualism/ collectivism	-16.2381*	1.8030	.000	-22.490	-9.987
	Masculinity/ femininity	-5.6964	1.8703	.120	-12.181	.788
	Long short term orientation	-7.4464*	1.8703	.015	-13.931	-.962
	Indulgence Restraint	-10.5714*	1.8030	.000	-16.823	-4.320
Long short term orientation	Power distance	3.1607	2.1841	.833	-4.412	10.733
	Individualism/ collectivism	-8.7917*	2.0506	.007	-15.901	-1.682
	Masculinity/ femininity	1.7500	2.1100	.983	-5.566	9.066
	Uncertainty avoidance	7.4464*	1.8703	.015	.962	13.931
	Indulgence restraint	-3.1250	2.0506	.801	-10.235	3.985
Indulgence restraint	Power distance	6.2857	2.1267	.142	-1.088	13.659
	Individualism/ collectivism	-5.6667	1.9893	.003	-12.564	1.231
	Masculinity/ femininity	4.8750	2.0506	.357	-2.235	11.985
	Uncertainty avoidance	10.5714*	1.8030	.000	4.320	16.823
	Long short term orientation	3.1250	2.0506	.801	-3.985	10.235

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As Table 4 indicates the sig equals .00 which is lower than the confidence level of .05 and therefore it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the vocabulary scores of male participants with different cultural dimensions. To find out where the differences lie, a Scheffe post hoc test was run. Table 5 gives the results.

As shown in the Table 5, learners with individualism/collectivism cultural orientation have significantly outperformed all the other male learners in other culturally oriented groups.

The second research question sought to probe if the interactionist dynamic assessment differently affects the vocabulary learning of female learners with different cultural dimensions. A one-way ANOVA was run and Table 6 displays the descriptive statistics of vocabulary scores for the female participants with different cultural dimensions.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics of vocabulary scores for the female participants with different cultural dimensions

Descriptive statistics	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. error	Std. dev.	Variance
Female power distance	11	14.0	21.0	16.818	.6152	2.0405	4.164
Female individualism/collectivism	9	17.0	39.0	27.778	2.3141	6.9422	48.194
Female masculinity/ femininity	13	19.0	31.0	25.154	1.1649	4.2001	17.641
Female uncertainty avoidance	15	10.0	19.0	12.800	.7118	2.7568	7.600
Female long short term orientation	7	16.0	30.0	20.000	1.8127	4.7958	23.000
Female indulgence restraint	10	12.0	33.0	23.000	1.9149	6.0553	36.667
Valid N (listwise)	7						

Table 7 demonstrates the results of Leven's test for the homogeneity of variances.

Table 7: Results of Leven's test for the homogeneity of variances

Levene statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2.857	5	59	.223

As can be seen in Table 7, the sig. value is .223 which is higher than .05 and thus the homogeneity of variances as an assumption of ANOVA is met. Table 8 shows the results of ANOVA run on the vocabulary scores of the female participants with different cultural dimensions.

As Table 8 shows the sig. is .000 which is lower than the confidence level of .05 and therefore it can be concluded that there are significant differences between the vocabulary scores of female participants with different cultural dimensions. To find out where the differences lie, a Scheffe post hoc test was run. Table 9 shows the results.

Table 8: Results of ANOVA run on the vocabulary scores of the female participants with different cultural dimensions

Female vocabulary scores	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	1859.854	5	371.971	18.088	.000
Within groups	1213.284	59	20.564		
Total	3073.138	64			

Table 9: Scheffe post hoc test on the vocabulary scores of female learners with different cultural dimensions

Dependent variable: Female vocabulary scores		Mean diff. (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.	95% conf. interval	
(I) Female groups	(J) Female groups				Lower bound	Upper bound
Power distance	Individualism/ collectivism	-10.9596*	2.0382	.000	-17.977	-3.942
	Masculinity/ femininity	-8.3357*	1.8578	.003	-14.732	-1.939
	Uncertainty avoidance	4.0182	1.8001	.428	-2.180	10.216
	Long-short term orientation	-3.1818	2.1925	.832	-10.731	4.367
	Indulgence restraint	-6.1818	1.9814	.100	-13.0040	.640
Individualism/ collectivism	Power distance	10.9596*	2.0382	.000	3.942	17.977
	Masculinity/ femininity	2.6239	1.9664	.002	-4.147	9.395
	Uncertainty avoidance	14.9778*	1.9120	.000	8.395	21.561
	Long-short term orientation	7.7778	2.2853	.005	-.091	15.646
	Indulgence restraint	4.7778	2.0836	.396	-2.396	11.952
Masculinity/ femininity	Power distance	8.3357*	1.8578	.003	1.939	14.732
	Individualism/ collectivism	-2.6239	1.9664	.002	-9.395	4.147
	Uncertainty avoidance	12.3539*	1.7184	.000	6.437	18.270
	Long-short term orientation	5.1539	2.1260	.332	-2.166	12.474
	Indulgence restraint	2.1539	1.9074	.936	-4.414	8.721
Uncertainty avoidance	Power distance	-4.0182	1.8001	.428	-10.216	2.180
	Individualism/ collectivism	-14.9778*	1.9120	.000	-21.561	-8.395
	Masculinity/ femininity	-12.3539*	1.7184	.000	-18.270	-6.437
	Long-short term orientation	-7.2000*	2.0758	.047	-14.347	-.053
	Indulgence restraint	-10.2000*	1.8513	.000	-16.574	-3.826
Long-short term orientation	Power distance	3.1818	2.1925	.832	-4.367	10.731
	Individualism/ collectivism	-7.7778	2.2853	.005	-15.646	.091
	Masculinity/ femininity	-5.1539	2.1259	.332	-12.474	2.166
	Uncertainty avoidance	7.2000*	2.0757	.047	.053	14.347
	Indulgence restraint	-3.0000	2.2348	.873	-10.695	4.695
Indulgence restraint	Power distance	6.1818	1.9814	.100	-.640	13.004
	Individualism/ collectivism	-4.7778	2.0836	.396	-11.952	2.396
	Masculinity/ femininity	-2.1539	1.9074	.936	-8.721	4.414
	Uncertainty avoidance	10.2000*	1.8513	.000	3.826	16.574
	Long-short term orientation	3.0000	2.2348	.873	-4.695	10.695

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As shown in the Table 9, learners with individualism/ collectivism cultural orientation have significantly outperformed all the other female learners in other culturally oriented groups.

Discussion

The present study sought to investigate if interactionist dynamic assessment differently affects the vocabulary learning of male and female EFL learners with different cultural dimensions. The results of statistical analyses indicated that male learners with individualism/ collectivism cultural orientation significantly outperformed all the other male learners in other culturally oriented groups. Likewise, female learners with individualism/ collectivism cultural orientation significantly outperformed all the other female learners in other culturally oriented groups.

The findings of the current study can be explained with regard to the characteristics of such cultural dimensions. Based on the results of the study, the collectivism/ individualism dimension was mostly associated with dynamic assessment and vocabulary learning. In other words, dynamic assessment had the most significant effect on learners with a collectivism/ individualism orientation. The significant effect of the collectivism/ individualism dimension may lie in that individualistic learners can benefit the most from dynamic assessment, while collectivist learners may benefit the least from dynamic assessment.

To find explanations for the above finding, it can be argued that within educational settings cultural values significantly shape students' assumptions of what learning is, how it should occur, and what type of teaching is the best. In other words, the purpose of education is perceived differently in individualist and collectivist societies. Individualistically-oriented cultures teach the student to learn to cope with new, unknown, unforeseen situations, while in collectivist cultures, learning is intended to prepare the individual to cope with the collective values of the society (Nelson, 2000). From an individualistic perspective, one of the main goals of schooling is to bring up independent, autonomous learners and academic progress is measured through individual assessment and individual grades. In collectivist classrooms, however, group success rather than individual achievement is the goal, so students rely on, and support each other.

Students in individual contexts are encouraged to take part in their learning process, speak their minds, and question their teachers (Al-Issa, 2005). Teaching in individualist cultures is not mere transmission of knowledge to students but rather as sharing and negotiation of knowledge (Al-Issa, 2005). Teachers in such contexts encourage risk taking, competition and problem solving. Learning in an individualistic culture requires considerable mutual interaction among students and teachers. Collectivist societies, however, as defined by Triandis (1995), view individuals as part of one or more groups, where priority is given to the goals of the collectives, rather than personal goals. Students of collectivist cultures view teachers as more expert, more qualified, and in charge of all decisions related to education (Meleis, 1982). Students' failure is thus the teachers' fault and their success is

the teachers' credit. Unlike individualist cultures, competition is not encouraged and education is only a tool to gain prestige and a higher social status in one's social group (Hofstede, 1986).

The two contrasting value systems of individualism/collectivism also differ in their emphasis on independence and success, from the individual or group point of view (Hofstede, 1997). Students with a collectivist background do not value personal success as much as collective accomplishments. They know how their personal achievements translate into final achievements, so they do not wait for individual motivational counselling (Faitar, 2006). In an individualist culture, however, it is natural for students to expect the teacher to raise their spirits and give them confidence that even a poor performance can be converted to excellence. Individualistic schools encourage students to become independent thinkers and learn individually.

The results of the present study suggest that in the first place Iranian EFL teachers can take advantage of the use of dynamic assessment as well as learners' cultural orientations when it comes to teaching vocabulary. Language teacher trainers can focus on the incorporation of dynamic assessment in their course content to better prepare the teachers for delivering dynamic assessment in the light of cultural orientations. In addition to language teachers and teacher trainers, material developers need to be aware of the positive aspects of dynamic assessment and learners' cultural orientations and design their textbooks in a way that accommodates the use of dynamic assessment.

Based on the results of the study it can be concluded that cultural orientations of learners affect their language learning experiences, particularly vocabulary learning. This finding can enhance teachers' awareness regarding the role of cultural issues in language learning and teaching. Consequently, teachers and decision makers in language education can make informed decisions about the inclusion or exclusion of various language learning activities in line with the cultural orientations of learners. Giving cultural awareness to the language learners may also be considered one way to pave the way for better language learning experiences in learners with different cultural orientations. Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004) argued that more cultural awareness leads to broader mind, more tolerance, and better cultural sensitivity. Aside from cultural implications of the study, in the present study, it was also found that dynamic assessment contributed to the vocabulary learning of Iranians. Although caution should be exercised in generalising the findings to the non-Iranian language learners, the fact that this finding strengthened the positive role of dynamic assessment in learning would highlight the effectiveness of dynamic assessment in language learning. Not only the results of the present study highlighted that dynamic assessment is effective in language learning, it also became evident that theories and principles behind dynamic assessment are valid in promoting learning. Accordingly, teachers and curriculum developers may use creatively theories and principles behind dynamic assessment for the purpose of vocabulary instruction.

Conclusion

Like many other studies, the present study had some limitations. The participants were selected from among intermediate level learners due to availability reasons. Thus, replicating the study with other levels of proficiency is recommended. Moreover, only participants within the age range of 18 to 30 were available to the researcher. Thus, future researchers are encouraged to carry out the study with other age groups. Additionally, the participants of the present study were selected based on convenience sampling which may put restrictions on the generalisability of the findings. Thus, in the future, researchers may carry out the study with randomly selected participants to enhance the generalisability of the findings. The participants of the current study were from Iran. Other studies may select participants from different countries and thus investigate the cross cultural differences in the light of dynamic assessment and the contributions DA may make to vocabulary learning. The present study just focused on vocabulary as the dependent variable of the study. In the future, researchers may intend to focus on other language skills and components e.g., grammar, writing, etc.

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