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Humorous Videos and Idiom Achievement: Some Pedagogical Considerations for EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

Employing a quasi-experimental design, this study examined the efficacy of humorous idiom video clips on the achievement of Iranian undergraduate students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Forty humorous video clips from the English Idiom Series called "The Teacher" from the BBC website were used to teach 120 idioms to 61 undergraduate students at the University of Bojnord (UB). A 40-item idiom pretest was given to the experimental group (EG) and the control group (CG) while an independent-samples t-test was used to compare the means of these two groups based on posttest scores. A 15-item attitudinal questionnaire captured participants' attitudes toward learning English idioms through video clips. The results indicate that there was a significant difference between the EG and CG mean scores: humorous video clips do facilitate EFL learners' idioms achievement and learners exhibit a positive attitude toward their application in the classroom.

Keywords: language teaching; language learning; humorous video clips; idiom achievement

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Introduction

Learning English, in general, and idioms, in particular, is particularly difficult in Iran as students lack the opportunities to engage in such learning within authentic situations. Educational video clips appear to provide the necessary opportunities for such learning (Mahmoodi-Shahrebabaki, 2014). As Lundblom and Woods (2012) point out, idioms “appear in conversation, print (magazines and newspapers), and media (movies, radio, and television)” (p. 203). At times, the idiomatic meaning can be understood from the constituent parts comprising the idiom (Vegge & Haumann, 2012). At other times, the words that comprise the idiom make it difficult to ascertain its figurative meaning (Rodriguez & Moreno, 2000).

Clearly, defining what constitutes an idiom is not an easy task. It is a frequently used term in the literature, but unfortunately, to date, there is no consensus over its definition. Marlies (1995) defines idiom as “an expression whose overall figurative meaning cannot be derived from the meaning of its parts” (p. 283). Moon (2006) defines it as a fixed sequence of words with a meaning which goes beyond the constituent parts. Though similar in meaning, these definitions are not the same. For example, in the former, the focus is on the figurative meaning; in the latter, the focus is on a fixed sequence of words. For the purposes of this discussion, our study used the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English idiom definition: “a group of words that has a special meaning that is different from the ordinary meaning of each separate word”. For example, ‘under the weather’ is an idiom that means to be ‘ill’. Just knowing the individual dictionary meanings of the words ‘under’ and ‘the weather’ will not help to infer its idiomatic meaning ‘to be ill’.

Important to note here is that few studies have been carried out to investigate the effect of using video clips on idiom learning in Iranian EFL classes (Ghaderi & Afshinfar, 2014; Mahmoodi-Shahrebabaki, 2014; Khoshniat & Dowlatabadi, 2014). More specifically, Tabatabaei and Reisi Gahroei (2011) found that, despite the lack of authentic resources and opportunities to use the English language in Iran, using video clips has a positive effect on teaching and learning idioms. According to Reisi Gahroei and Tabatabaei (2012), Iranian EFL learners are not sufficiently provided with the necessary authentic situations to become proficient enough at using and learning English idioms. The authors believe that although video clips can provide learners with ample opportunities to learn idioms, not much research has been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of such clips on idiom learning in Iran.

Accordingly, this study investigates the effect of using humorous video clips on Iranian EFL learners’ idiom learning.

This study is closely associated with some of Gardner’s (1983; 1993; 2000) multiple intelligences in a controlled classroom setting and attempts to examine the effect of integrating some of the multiple intelligences in instructional and humorous video clips on idiom achievement. Toward this end, this study investigates the two research questions below:

1. Does the employment of humorous video clips significantly improve Iranian undergraduate EFL learners’ idiom achievement?

2. What are the Iranian undergraduate EFL learners' attitudes towards the employment of humorous video clips in the classroom?

Literature Review

Liontas (2006) maintains that every language has phrases commonly defined as slang, proverbs, idioms, metaphors, metonymies, and many other such expression that are ubiquitous and at times confusing. Since they cannot be understood literally, their learning has been considered a major challenge for language learners (Mahmoodi-Shahrehabaki, 2014). Idioms form a significant part of the oral and written discourse of native speakers (Alali & Schmitt, 2012; Zarei & Rahimi, 2012). Foreign language idioms are challenging (Tompkins, 2001) and, at times, notoriously difficult to teach and learn (Kovecses, 2002).

According to Briggs and Smith (2017), idioms are rich elements of formulaic language which makes them difficult to define. They argue that the rapid growth of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) globally requires the development of idiomatic competence by language learners. In an interview with Sadeghi (2017), Liontas states that idioms—as one of many types of figurative language—are like the tip of an iceberg where only 10% of them are visible. The remaining 90% of figurative language remains submerged and unaccounted for in the research studies to date. And it is that 90% that, so Liontas argues, needs to be illuminated and investigated in the years ahead. As echoed by Hinkel (2017), the teaching and learning of idioms is necessary for effective spoken and written communication because they are surprisingly frequent in every language.

According to Cieślicka and Heredia (2017), only a small number of theories have described the learning, storing, and processing of idioms in L2 learners. Based on Paivio's (1986) dual coding theory, the application of still or animated pictures can lead to better memory performance due to the association of visual and verbal information. Scriven and Hefferin (1998) maintain that laughing makes the learner's brain operate more efficiently and symmetrically. Similarly, Jonas (2012) asserts that humor and videos stimulate the learner's brain and can lead to better and longer retention.

Gardner (1983, 1993, 2000), based on his theory of multiple intelligences, believes that schools focus most of their attention on two intelligences: (1) *Verbal-linguistic intelligence* (the ability to understand and creatively utilize written and oral language; linguistically intelligent students are word/book smart) and (2) *Logical-mathematical intelligence* (the ability to recognize patterns and understand relationships between objects, especially numbers; mathematically intelligent students are number/ reasoning/logic smart).

The importance of these two intelligences notwithstanding, it is critical to note here that although different individuals are born with different capacities and aptitudes, this does not imply that some of them are more or less intelligent than others. It simply means that they just learn, think, process, and produce concepts differently. By extension, all children can learn as long as teachers

are willing to recognize the multiple intelligences each child brings to the learning process. They can do so by first noticing and taking into account children's diverse skills, abilities, talents, and preferences. The integration of multiple intelligences in instructional methods helps to uncover and reactivate the potential hidden within each child. Thus, Gardner's theory suggests an instructional transformation in which teachers are encouraged to use music, cooperative learning, role play, multimedia, and field trips, for example, instead of dry lectures, writing assignments, formulas, and boring textbooks (see also Gardner, 2007). By all accounts, his theory provides a new pathway to facilitate effective teaching and learning. In short, it provides teachers and students with teaching/learning tools that go well beyond the conventional methods.

By extension, Liontas (2002) puts forth the argument that early, extensive, and systematic exposure to idioms in a linguistically supportive context can indeed enhance idiomatic competence. Boers, Lindstromberg, Littlemore, Stengers, and Eyckmans (2008) argue for the positive effect of picture-enhanced instruction of idioms, an argument also echoed in the work of Tompkins (2001) who stresses the use of idiom posters. Video is another means to help EFL learners learn idioms. According to White, Easton, and Anderson (2000), videos can enhance understanding of complicated concepts. Indeed, based on dual coding theory (Paivio, 1986), the application of still or animated pictures can lead to better memory performance due to the symbiotic association of visual and verbal information.

Goodman (2003), Christopher, Walter, Marek, and Koenig (2004), and Mechling (2005) recommend using videos in the classroom to improve students' learning. Technology is integrated with humor that is contextually connected to stimulate the brain and facilitate learning by making it more attractive and engaging for students. Humor seems to lead to creative thinking, offering in the process different solutions to linguistic problems (Scriven & Hefferin, 1998). It can also enhance the performance of memory (Thompson, 2000), as both humor and learning appear to be directly connected to memory (Zola, 2003).

Reisi Gahroei and Tabatabaei (2012) studied the application of etymology, movie clips, and synonyms-antonyms on idiom learning among Iranian high school EFL learners. Their findings revealed that the application of etymology and movie clips were indeed effective and, furthermore, that the learners had more positive attitudes toward using them in idiom learning. It is worth noting here that the effective and successful use of video clips mainly depends on a teacher's ability in helping his or her students understand the material (King, 2002).

According to Abkarian, Jones, and West (1992) and Gibbs and O'Brien (1990), pictures facilitate the comprehension and retention of idioms. Since many idioms are based on knowledge and image, associating an idiom with a concrete scene will invariably involve mental imagery. Based on Liontas (2002, 2006), L2 learners may face difficulties understanding idioms even if they know the meaning of the constituent words. As pointed out by Liontas (2017), idioms should be taught to L2 learners because they expand their etymological, grammatical, syntactical, and sociocultural knowledge by providing the unique opportunity to integrate language and culture.

Bagheria and Ghoorchaei (2014), who used subtitle video clips in teaching EFL to test the effectiveness of subtitled inputs for the comprehension of English idiomatic expressions among

Iranian EFL learners in the upper-intermediate level, state that one of the effective technological tools in EFL learning and teaching, in general, and in idiom comprehension, in particular, is taking full advantage of videos. Schnotz and Rasch (2005), Hoffer and Leutner (2007), and Ainworth (2008) also recommend the use of video clips because their use provides additional information, reduces cognitive load, and motivates learners to learn idioms within contextual constructs supporting their use. Using humorous video clips may also offer L2 learners additional opportunities to learn idioms more easily.

Methodology

Research Design

It is widely known that quasi-experimental studies may take on many forms. In this study, the quasi-experimental nonequivalent intact groups design was used because random assignment as one of the key ingredients of experimental designs was not possible due to the preplanned schedules at the University of Bojnord (UB). With respect to internal validity, this design appears to be inferior to randomized experiments; however, the researchers were compelled to use it due to the stated limitation.

The pretest and posttest design allowed the researchers to measure the potential effects of their intervention by examining the difference between the subjects' pretest and posttest scores. To obtain the true effects of the intervention, having both a treatment group, who received the intervention, and a control group, who received the "business-as-usual" condition, is necessary. Having these two groups helped the researchers control for other possible extraneous factors not related to the intervention. The following diagram summarizes the research design used in this study.

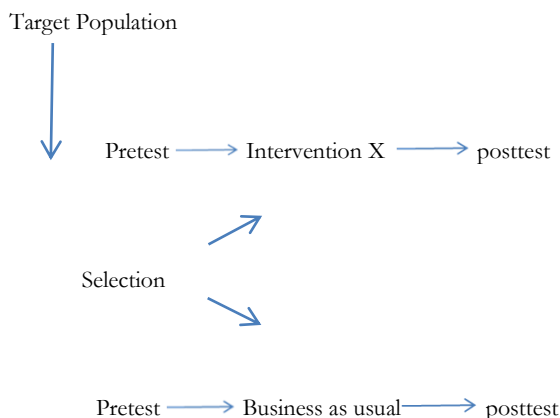


Figure1. Participants and Setting

Because Iranian State universities admit students nationally, the participants in this study were from different ethnic groups. Persian was the first language of the majority of the participants and gender was almost equally distributed within and between each group. The study was carried out during the first (Fall) semester of the Iranian academic year 1394-1395 (2015-2016) at the University of Bojnord (UB). This state university is located in north Khorasan, Bojnord, Iran. State universities offer general English programs consisting of 16 sessions and three hours per week. Students usually attend one two-hour fixed session minus half an hour break every week and one two-hour session every other week instead of a three hour session in a week. The procedure of selecting participants is summarized below:

- study commenced with 78 students but ended up with 61 participants
- the Nelson proficiency test was administered to 78 students
- 39 students in the EG and 30 students in the CG were eligible for the experiment.
- Of the 70 selected students, 36 in the EG and 30 in the CG were selected for the experiment.
- Four students whose scores were more than one SD above or below the mean were intentionally omitted from the experiment.
- 33 participants in the EG whose age ranged from 18 to 21 and 28 participants in the CG whose age ranged from 18 to 22 were eligible to sit for the posttest due to experimental mortality (attrition). That is, five participants were dropped from the research for a variety of reasons.

Instrumentation

To probe the research questions and gather the data, the following three instruments were employed.

Nelson Proficiency Test.

An already available standard proficiency test—the Nelson Series 350A (Flower & Coe, 1976)—was administered before the pretest to decide the prospective students' overall English language proficiency and homogenize them for the study. The multiple-choice fifty-item test included one cloze comprehension passage as well as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation sections. Out of 78 EFL learners who took the proficiency test, based on the results of their performance, only those learners whose scores on the test fell one SD above and below the mean were selected to take part in the study. According to Shahivand and Pazhakh (2012), the validity and reliability of this test have already been estimated several times by other researchers; therefore, this highly valid and reliable test ensured the homogeneity of all the participants regarding their English proficiency level. After omitting the extreme scores, the results of the two groups were compared through an independent-samples t-test (see Table 1).

Teacher-Made Idiom Test.

To minimize the effect of the participants' prior knowledge of the target idioms, a teacher-made idiom test was administered. This diagnostic test for the initial evaluation was designed and constructed in advance through a pilot study by the researcher. It included 50 items on idioms with one missing word from each item. To determine the validity of the test, the researchers asked three English language teaching (ELT) experts to comment on the content and appearance of the test. A class of undergraduate EFL learners from the general English programs was asked to fill in the missing blanks. The items were contextualized so that students can guess the missing word. Based on their performance, some items were revised, modified, and deleted. The reliability of the test was estimated 0.81 through Kuder and Richardson-21 formula.

Item analysis portrayed item statistics which could help the researchers determine which items were good and which needed improvement or deletion from the test. Since items that are either too easy or too difficult cannot discriminate adequately between student performance levels and, therefore, do not contribute statistically to the effectiveness of the test, 10 out of 50 items were subsequently deleted.

Finally, the researchers employed a 40-item test with a reliability of 0.81. This test was used as the pretest and posttest. To reduce the chance of remembering from the pretest, the arrangement of the items was changed in the posttest. The test had a total of 40 points and the time allotment was 40 minutes.

Attitude/Motivation Survey Questionnaire.

To investigate participants' attitudes toward learning idioms through humorous video clips, participants were asked to fill in a 15-item questionnaire using a 5-point scale. The responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was a modified version of Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) developed by Gardner (2005). The reliability of the questionnaire had already been determined to be 0.80 by Reisi Gahroei and Tabatabaei (2012) using the Cronbach Alfa. They had also established the questionnaire validity by asking some experienced experts in the field of TEFL to analyze its content. The experts had reported and confirmed the correspondence between the content and the purpose of the questionnaire.

Procedure

A collection of 40 humorous video clips from the English Idiom Series called "The Teacher" from the BBC website was used to teach idioms related to different topics such as animals, colors, sports, transport, body, and food. Each episode introduces three idioms for a total of 120 idioms.

The collection of data started in October, 2015. The Nelson Series 350A proficiency test (Flower & Coe, 1976) was administered before the pretest to decide the prospective students' overall English language proficiency and homogenize them for the study. To measure the background knowledge of the participants, a reliable test of English idioms including 40 fill-in-the-blank items,

which had already been developed, was administered as the pretest at the outset of the term. The allotted time was 40 minutes. The items were scored by the researcher and a university professor. Each correct answer gained one point and each wrong answer received no point. There were no penalties for wrong answers. Since the test was objectively scored based on the exact method, inter-rater reliability was not supposed to be necessary.

In the EG, the idioms were taught by showing humorous video clips, each clip containing three idioms. Each clip was shown two times and participants were asked them to write down the idioms. They were instructed to guess and infer the meaning of each idiom based on the context provided. They were also permitted to ask for more clarification and examples if necessary. After making sure that participants knew the meaning of the idioms, they were then asked to use them in new sentences in collaboration with their classmates. Two video clips (with three idioms per clip) were taught in each session. Each session lasted for one and a half hours with 30 minutes being allocated to teaching the given idioms. In all, 120 idioms were taught in 20 thirty-minute sessions.

In the CG, the same idioms were taught by using synonyms, antonyms, examples, explanations, and translation as a last resort. These techniques were also used in the EG; that is, the treatment in the EG included the video clips but the placebo in the CG lacked the video clips. The main difference between the two groups was the inclusion of the video clips in the EG. The treatment process took two months.

After exposing the two groups to these two idiom teaching approaches (video clips in the EG; no video clips in the CG), participants sat for the fill-in-the-blanks posttest that contained 40 contextualized idioms. Thereafter, the test papers were collected and scored by the researchers and an experienced university professor.

Finally, Version 19 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the scores following the treatment. The time lapse between pretest and posttest was 14 weeks. An independent-samples t-test was used to compare the means of the two groups based on the posttest scores. To collect additional data regarding participants' attitudes toward learning English idioms through video clips, the researchers distributed the related questionnaire at the end of the treatment among the EG participants. Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, and standard deviation) was used to summarize the collected data.

Results and Discussion

Results of the Nelson Proficiency Test

Normally distributed data is a requirement of the independent-samples t-test. Therefore, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to test the hypothesis that the distribution of data is normal. An exploratory data analysis was then conducted to determine if the EG and CG scores were normally distributed. Since the Asymp. Sig. was not statistically significant, normality failed

to be rejected. This suggests that a parametric procedure that assumes normality (e.g., a t-test) can be used safely.

The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality indicate that neither the EG score distribution ($SD = 3.82, p = 0.34$) nor the CG score distribution ($SD = 3.75, p = 0.74$) deviate significantly from a normal distribution-

After selecting the learners whose scores on the test fell one SD above or below the mean and omitting the extreme scores, the results of the two groups were compared through an independent samples t-test using the computer software SPSS as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1
The Independent Samples t-test for the Experimental and Control Group (Proficiency Test)

Group	N	M	SD	df	t	Sig.
Experimental	39	14.46	3.82	68	0.50	0.61
Control	31	14.00	3.75			

To compare the scores of the two groups before the treatment, first, the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was checked. Since it was not significant ($p = 0.71 > 0.05$), it was assumed that the variances were approximately equal. As shown in Table 1, there was no significant difference between the EG ($M = 14.46, SD = 3.82$) and the CG [$M = 14.00, SD = 3.75; t(68) = 0.50, p = 0.61$] before the treatment.

Result of the Teacher-Made Pretest

Following the collection of data, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to test the hypothesis that the distribution of data was normal. Before calculating and reporting the mean or other parametric measures, the statistical significance level was set in advance at 0.05. An exploratory data analysis followed to determine if the EG and CG scores were normally distributed. Since the Asymp. Sig. was not statistically significant, normality failed to be rejected. This suggests that a parametric procedure that assumes normality (e.g., a t-test) can be used safely.

The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality indicates that neither the EG score distribution ($SD = 1.99, p = 0.50$) nor the CG score distribution ($SD = 1.52, p = 0.40$) deviate significantly from a normal distribution. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the possible differences between the means of the two groups. Table 2 presents the summary of the t-test.

Table 2
The Independent Samples t-test for the Experimental and Control Groups (Pretest)

Group	N	M	SD	df	t	Sig.
Experimental	36	9.55	1.99	64	-0.85	0.39
Control	30	9.93	1.52			

To compare the scores of the two groups before the treatment, first, the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was checked. Since it was not significant ($p = 0.13 > 0.05$), it was assumed that the variances were approximately equal. As shown in Table 2, there was no significant difference between the EG ($M = 9.55$, $SD = 1.99$) and the CG [$M = 9.93$, $SD = 1.52$; $t(64) = -0.85$, $p = 0.39$] before the treatment.

Results of the First Research Question

The first research question sought to investigate the effect of the employment of humorous video clips on improving Iranian undergraduate EFL learners' idiom achievement. To answer this question, an independent-samples t-test was used to compare the performance of the EG and CG on the posttest following the treatment. Before calculating and reporting the mean or other parametric measures, the statistical significance level was set in advance at 0.05.

Since the Asymp. Sig. from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was not statistically significant, normality failed to be rejected. This suggests that a parametric procedure that assumes normality (e.g., a t-test) can be used safely.

The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality indicates that neither the EG score distribution ($SD = 3.44$, $p = 0.94$) nor the CG score distribution ($SD = 3.97$, $p = 0.80$) deviate significantly from a normal distribution. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the possible differences between the means of the two groups. Table 3 presents the summary of the t-test.

Table 3
The Independent Samples t-test for the Experimental and Control Groups (Posttest)

Group	N	M	SD	df	t	Sig.
Experimental	33	32.90	3.44	59	7.11	0.00*
Control	28	26.14	3.97			

Note. *Significant at the $p < .05$ level

To compare the scores of the two groups following the treatment, first, the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was checked. Since it was not significant ($p = 0.36 > 0.05$), it was assumed that the variances were approximately equal. As shown in Table 3, there was a significant difference between the EG ($M = 32.90$, $SD = 3.44$) and the CG [$M = 26.14$, $SD = 3.97$; $t(59) = 7.11$, $p = 0.00$] after the treatment. Since there was a significant difference between the means of the two groups, the null hypothesis (the employment of humorous video clips does not significantly improve Iranian undergraduate EFL learners' idiom achievement) was rejected.

These results suggest that humorous video clips do have a positive effect on the EFL learners' idiom achievement; that is, the EG learners who were taught by humorous video clips outperformed the CG learners who were not. Therefore, the effectiveness of employing humorous video clips in idiom instruction was supported.

Results of the Second Research Question

To uncover the attitudes of Iranian undergraduate EFL learners toward the employment of humorous video clips in the classroom (this study's second research question posed), Gardner's (2005) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) was administered to the 33 participants in the EG who had experienced idiom learning through humorous video clips. Data were analyzed using the SPSS (Version 19). Table 4 presents the pertinent descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, standard deviation). Comparison between the mean scores of the 15 items indicated that the participants strongly agreed with items one and nine and only moderately agreed with the other items (see Appendix A). The overall mean score of 3.89 indicates their positive attitudes toward the application of humorous video clips in idiom instruction.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistic of the Students' Attitudes towards Idiom Learning through the Employment of Humorous Video Clips (N = 33)

Items	1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q1	0	0	0	4	11	4.73	0.45
Q2	0	0	6	6	3	3.80	0.77
Q3	0	0	5	6	4	3.93	0.79
Q4	0	1	6	7	1	3.53	0.74
Q5	0	1	7	5	2	3.53	0.83
Q6	0	1	4	9	1	3.66	0.72
Q7	0	1	4	8	2	3.73	0.79
Q8	0	1	2	11	1	3.80	0.67
Q9	0	0	0	8	7	4.46	0.51
Q10	0	0	4	9	2	3.86	0.63
Q11	0	0	5	9	1	3.73	0.59
Q12	0	0	3	9	3	4.00	0.65
Q13	0	0	2	12	1	3.93	0.45
Q14	0	1	3	9	2	3.80	0.77
Q15	0	1	3	8	3	3.86	0.83
Overall Mean Score and Standard Deviation						3.89	0.32

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of the employment of humorous video clips on improving Iranian undergraduate EFL learners' idiom achievement. Following treatment, the results from an independent-samples t-test revealed that there was a significant difference between the means of the EG and CG; that is, the application of humorous video clips does indeed have a significant and positive effect on Iranian EFL learners' idiom achievement. Furthermore, the results from the attitudinal questionnaire showed that all the participants had positive attitudes toward the application of humorous video clips in the classroom.

The results of this study can be interpreted in light of Gardner's (2007) theory of multiple intelligences which emphasizes the integration of multiple intelligences in instructional methods to reactivate hidden potential in the learners, and Paivio's (1986) dual coding theory which maintains that application of still or animated pictures can indeed lead to better memory performance due to the association of both visual and verbal information. Based on these theories, this study attempted to examine the effects of integrating some of the intelligences in instructional and humorous video clips on idiom achievement.

The study's findings lend support to White, Easton, and Anderson's (2000) findings that showed videos to enhance understanding of complicated concepts. The findings also support Liontas's (2002) assertion that extensive and systematic exposure to idioms in a linguistically supportive context can enhance idiomatic competence. By extension, the findings also lend support to a number of instructional recommendations expressed by authors such as Goodman (2003), Christopher, et al. (2004), Mechling (2005), and Mahmoodi-Shahrehabaki (2014) that using videos in the classroom can indeed improve students' learning. In addition, they support Mahmoodi-Shahrehabaki's (2014) argument that educational video clips seem to provide sufficient opportunities of sound learning activities in the classroom

The findings are, furthermore, in line with those of Ward and Lepeintre (1996) and Silvia (2008) in that since a film is entertaining, it also increases interest in the topic, thereby enhancing learner's motivation to learn and achievement. In addition, the findings support Tabatabaei and Reisi Gahroei's (2011) findings that showed the effective role of movie clips in idiom teaching and learning. And finally, they are compatible with Scriven and Hefferin's (1998) argument that

When people are laughing, their brains seem to operate more efficiently and symmetrically. Humor seems to facilitate a more balanced cerebral activity that leads to creative thinking. This creative thinking produces different solutions to problems than the individual or group might otherwise generate. (p. 14)

As suggested by Wang (2015), the observed advantages of humorous video clips application in this study included:

1. Stimulation of students' autonomy and proactivity.
2. Enrichment of classroom activities, motivation of students' passion for EFL idiom learning, and enhancement of students' attention in the classroom.
3. Depiction of realistic circumstances in life.
4. Providing students with direct access to a taste of western culture.

In sum, the findings suggest that the effective employment of humorous video clips in the classroom can indeed facilitate idiom learning. Accordingly, the findings can be of direct benefit

to EFL teachers by encouraging them to change their viewpoints and to revise their methods of idiom instruction. Since video clips contain a lot of input about the social and cultural background of native speakers, they can also provide students with authentic material and real-life situations that are certain to help students improve their communicative competence and cultural awareness.

Conclusion

Idioms have long been regarded to be an important aspect of EFL competency. Given their vital role in language proficiency, conducting research on their teaching and learning seems to be essential. This study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of using humorous video clips in an EFL context. The results revealed that the application of humorous video clips had a positive effect on EFL learners' idiom achievement and, furthermore, participants had positive attitudes toward the application of humorous video clips in idioms instruction.

The importance of these findings aside, the present study also had some limitations worth reviewing here. To begin, the classification of idioms into different types may well be a confounding variable (limitation) here as no classifications were applied to select idioms on the account that classified materials were not available. In fact, the available classified materials were not accompanied with humorous video clips. Therefore, further research is needed to study the effect of humorous video clips employment on the achievement of different classes of idioms. Further, since not all idioms lend themselves equally to video clips due to their opaque nature, researchers wishing to conduct their own investigations may well select other types of contextualization in an effort to better clarify the meaning of such targeted idioms. This study was carried out in the Iranian EFL context. Therefore, generalizing the study's results to other EFL/ESL situations outside of the prescribed Iranian context herein, while possible, should only be done with great caution.

Nonetheless, the findings of this study can have a number of pedagogical implications for teachers, students, material writers, and curriculum designers. EFL teaching, in general, and idiom teaching as a challenging component of it, in particular, have always been of great value to Iranian EFL teachers. They usually consider idiom instruction to be both "tricky" and "challenging." The findings presented herein can help them tackle these challenges by providing their students with humorous video clips while also supporting their interest in EFL idiom learning. The many advances in communication technologies to date can help EFL learners to learn idioms more independently through humorous video clips on their laptops or tablets. They can also learn them more easily and effectively on the Internet through video-conferencing.

Finally, material developers and curriculum designers alike can enrich their EFL idiom textbooks accompanied by CDs containing humorous idiom video clips. Such inclusions are certain to further motivate teachers and students alike to learn English idioms in a fun and enjoyable way.

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Appendix A

Attitude/Motivation Survey Questionnaire

Gender: **Age:** **Class:** **University:**

Please indicate your opinion about each statement by ticking the option which best indicates the extent to which you disagree or agree with it. The success of this investigation depends upon your accuracy.

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

1. Watching movie clips, including idioms, can be important to students to raise their awareness of idioms.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
2. Using movie clips, including idioms, is highly important to students because they can use idioms better when keeping in touch with foreign friends and acquaintances.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
3. Applying movie clips, including idioms, can be important to students because it will make them understand and become more knowledgeable.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
4. Learning idioms using movie clips can be important to students because it leads to long retention of idioms.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
5. Watching movie clips, including idioms, can be important to students for the comprehension of idiomatic meaning.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
6. Learning idioms via movie clips can be important to students because it helps a well-educated person to use them more effectively.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
7. Learning idioms through movie clips is not a waste of time.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
8. Learning idioms used in movie clips is important to a student because he can understand English-speaking films and videos, including idioms, better.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
9. Watching movie clips, including idioms, can stimulate students to figure out the meaning of newly encountered idioms by drawing from movie information.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
10. Watching movie clips, including idioms, is important to students so they can understand more English texts and books including idioms.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
11. It doesn't bother the students to use the idioms used in movie clips when speaking.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
12. Watching movie clips, including idioms, make students infer the meaning of unfamiliar words from the new situation.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

13. Watching movie clips, including idioms, can be important because students can interpret the figurative meaning of the idioms by using visualizers.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

14. The students can use the movie clips, including idioms, as a channel for their comprehension of the informal nature of certain idioms.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

15. Learning idioms using movie clips is important to students because without learning them masterly, the students feel something is missed.
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.