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A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF L1 TRANSLATION, L2 EQUIVALENT AND PICTURES ON THE ACQUISITION OF PROVERBS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to focus on the importance of English Proverbs for EFL learners. This study was an attempt to analyze the potential effects of three alternative methods in learning English proverbs. The study compared the possible effect of using pictures, first language translation and L2 definition on Iranian learners' acquisition of proverbs. A sample of 60 Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners was selected who were randomly assigned into three groups, each group comprising 20 pre-intermediate EFL learners. First, a proverb test was used as a pretest to make sure the participants were not familiar with the meaning of the proverbs. Then, a total of 40 proverbs were selected to be taught to the participants. The first group learned the proverbs with Persian translation, the second group was taught the same proverbs with the definition of the proverbs in L2 and the third group received those 40 proverbs with pictorial description. The treatment lasted 10 sessions in the three classes. After the treatment, the same test used as the pretest was presented to the three groups as the post-test to check the effect of each instructional procedure on the participants' level of proverbs. The analyses of the data showed that in comparison to two other methods, the use of pictorial mode in teaching proverbs significantly affected the learners' acquisition of proverbs.

Keywords: Acquisition of proverbs, First language translation, L2 equivalent, pictures.

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are used frequently in both spoken and written discourse. According to Mieder (2007), proverbs are employed by speakers and writers in different forms and appear in conversations, movies, TV programs, magazines, and newspapers. L2 readers and listeners should also have a good command of Proverbs if they want to understand the intended message properly. Moreover, proverbs are considered the most effective types of non-literal expressions that are used in various languages (Mieder, 2007). Consequently, for L2 learners to be more fluent and natural in conversations and to comprehend the target language effectively, they are supposed to acquire these two parts of the language. Furthermore, Nippold, Allen and Kirsch (2001) argue that L2 learners would never manage to integrate into the target language completely and will always be

as an outsider if they fail to understand the idioms and proverbs. As such, students are required to develop their knowledge of proverbs during the process of their language learning, and it is the teacher who is responsible for the task.

In this regard, Mieder (2004) claimed that proverbs should be taught in foreign language classrooms because of their content of educational wisdom. He believes that the importance of proverbs lies in their cultural and metaphorical meanings they imply. Mieder also argues that proverbs are a part of native speakers' competence and in this way; they help communicate some information regarding the nature of human beings and the world. Also, Hanzen (2007) suggests that material designers should include some tasks focusing on some proverbs in L2 textbooks and teaching materials.

Despite the vital need for the explicit teaching of Proverbs, however, teaching proverbs has not gained sufficient attention in language classrooms by L2 researchers and practitioners (Haas, 2008). Proverbs are

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rarely incorporated in EFL textbooks and there is also a paucity of exercises and activities that help learners to master the target language proverbs and even when they are included, they are utilized just as time-fillers (Pirainen, 2008; Vanyushkina-Holt, 2005). To date, few empirical investigations have been done on teaching proverbs in EFL classrooms in general and Iranian EFL contexts. Generally, they have not given the place they deserve in the field of L2 teaching. In this regard, Vanyushkina-Holt (2005) stated that in comparison with other fields, proverbs are ignored in EFL learning and teaching context. Accordingly, this research aimed to fill such a gap in foreign language pedagogy. The main purpose behind this study was to comparatively investigate the efficiency of three different techniques, i.e., using L1 translation, pictures, and L2 definition in teaching proverbs to Iranian EFL learners to find the best possible method used for teaching English proverbs.

To meet the study's goals and objectives, the following questions were formulated:

1. Does teaching English proverbs through using L1 translation have a statistically significant effect on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' level of English proverb knowledge?
2. Does teaching English proverbs through using pictorial mode have a statistically significant effect on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' level of English proverb knowledge?
3. Does teaching English proverbs through using L2 definition have a statistically significant effect on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' level of English proverb knowledge?
4. Are there any statistically significant differences between the effects of teaching proverbs through L1 translation, pictorial mode, and L2 definition in terms of learners' level of English proverb knowledge?

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Proverbs shape our cultural and metaphorical competence and have a key role in language teaching and learning. Proverbs are a part of every language and every culture. In fact, the main constituents of any language are in consideration of proverbs. Proverbs are considered as traditional verbal folklore genres and people all around the world have used the wisdom of proverbs as a guide. Roland (1929; cited in Alharbi, 2017) described proverbs as: "a short, well-known set of having wisdom, truth, morality and traditional views in a

metaphorical, fixed and storable form and that of the generations" (p.68).

Thanks to Wolfgang Bras (2004), proverbs have been introduced to teaching as educational tools. While learning foreign languages, learners can benefit from proverbs and sayings to practice cultural and metaphorical codes (Shabir, 2017). According to Kemper (1981), using proverbs in English language teaching is helpful in second or foreign language learner's effective communication. A large amount of research has been conducted on different features of proverbs such as their cognitive and psycholinguistic aspects as well as the influence of other variables on their comprehension and interpretation such as the effect of images, context, reading proficiency, word knowledge and analogical reasoning (Kızıldag, 2009; Nippold, Allen, & Kirsch, 2001), and some has investigated the relationship between age and comprehension/ interpretation of Proverbs (Duthie, Nippold, Billow, & Mansfield, 2008; Uekermann, Thoma&Daum, 2008). It should be noted that most of the studies are conducted on native speakers and language learners are somehow neglected (Turkol, 2003). Turkol (2003) in his study of 'proverb familiarity and interpretation task' discovered that compared to task familiarity, the semantic analysis was more influential in proverb interpretation. Alharbi (2017) investigated the role of sayings in the development of writing skills. As proverbs contain a moral value, they can be used as a teaching tool to motivate serious students to learn and write. So, English proverbs are expected to motivate students in coping with the writing course. Finally, the reaction of students to the usage of English proverbs was positive. Most of the students think that they can write a good topic sentence with an English proverb.

Among the few studies conducted on proverbs, those of Hanzen (2007) and Vanyushkina-Holt (2005) are worth mentioning. Hanzen (2007), in the analysis of English textbooks in Sweden, found that proverbs were used mostly for discussion. Also, some teachers believed that proverbs should be considered more seriously in language classes while some others held a different view. Besides, Boer and Demecheleer (2001) stressed that language teachers should include cross-cultural aspects of proverbs in their syllabus. As the literature shows, there is a paucity of research on teaching proverbs in English language classrooms in Iran which motivated this study.

On the other hand, some research has investigated the advantages of applying L1 in EFL contexts. Atkinson (1987; Bouangeune, 2009) referred to three reasons for incorporating L1 in language classes: a) it triggers learners' interest language classes; b) it decreases the chance of negative transfer, and c) it creates better use of class time. Moreover, he added that L1 can be used in language classes for checking learners' comprehension as well as encouraging them to cooperate in class activities. In support of what was already mentioned regarding the use of L1, Harbord (1992) stated that it helps improve communication among language learners. This idea was later supported by Butzkamm (2003) claiming that internalizing language items requires the use of L1 in language classrooms. Accordingly, Sharma (2006) proposed some guidelines for using L1 in language classes such as providing feedback, talking with students, and giving instructions. Later, he added that teachers can use L1 in foreign language classes to explain and clarify the items making a comparison between L1 and L2. Also, some cultural codes can be elaborated in this way. Other researchers (e.g. Aqel, 2006) referred to some other advantages of using L1 such as grammar explanation, error correction, and class management. Aqel (2006) in his investigation regarding the use of L1 in EFL classes found that most teachers and learners believed the use of L1 could improve their comprehension of the materials.

Alternatively, applying pictures can make education more pleasant to learners; however, teachers will use pictures with other materials in the class. Regarding using pictures in teaching proverbs, Fotovatnia and Khaki (2012) claimed that applying pictures in the language classroom, specifically for teaching idioms and proverbs, can be beneficial to language learners. Conducting a research on the effectiveness of three methods in teaching idioms to TEFL undergraduates, they concluded that pictorial aids were favoured among other methods. The researcher of this study tried to use pictures in the context after the verbal information has been provided. Several studies (Hass, 2008; Uekermann, Thoma & Daum, 2008) have investigated the effect of using image and sounds on proverb teaching. Some studies such as Boers, Eyckmans, and Stengers (2007) found that using pictures are helpful for recalling proverb figurative meanings. Also, Boers and Lindstromberg (2005) claimed that the use of effective images facilitates the recollection of proverbs meaning

and use.

Other studies (Fotovatnia & Khaki, 2012; Sadeghilar, 1993) have looked for ways of using pictorial modes in the teaching of idiomatic language and proverbs. As the meaning of the proverbs can often be derived from the original, literal usage of the phrases (Mieder, 2007), it was expected that pictorial support would facilitate the acquisition of proverbs. However, experimental research has produced mixed results. For instance, Boers, Eyckmans and Stengers (2007) examining the mnemonic effectiveness of pictorial elucidation found that using pictures and verbal explanations positively affect the retention of proverb meaning in L2 but it showed a slight negative influence on the retention of proverb form by high-imager learners.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in three experimental groups adopting a quasi-experimental design because the participants were selected non-randomly at the beginning of the study. The data were gathered and analyzed quantitatively.

Participants: A sample of 60 Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners was selected from a language institute in Tehran. Their age ranged from 17 to 24. There were both male and female learners with different educational degrees. They have been learning English in this language institute for more than two years. They were all from the same country, i.e. Iran, where English is taught as a foreign language. However, it should be stated that none of the students was so proficient in English to be familiar with English proverbs. After homogenizing the participants, they were randomly assigned into three experimental groups, each group comprising 20 pre-intermediate EFL learners.

Instruments: The first instrument used in the present study was Allen's (1992) version of Oxford Placement Test (OPT) administered to make sure that all the participants in the study enjoyed the same level of language proficiency. This test included two sections of grammar and vocabulary comprising 100 items. The OPT provided a reliable and efficient means of placing students at different levels of language ability. After administering the test, those learners whose scores were between one SD above and below the mean were selected as the participants of the study.

The next instrument was a researcher-developed proverb test used as both pretest and posttest. A test comprising 54 proverbs was administered a few weeks

before the beginning of the experiment to make sure that the participants were not familiar with the proverbs. Then, several proverbs that were familiar to the students were replaced by new ones or omitted to ensure the reliability of the study results. It should be noted that the test was designed in a way that the participants were asked to select the answers that best described the meaning of the given proverbs. Several items also required the students to choose the correct equivalent of the proverb. It is noteworthy that the test validity was confirmed by some experts in the field. The final version of the test included 40 items, whose reliability was tested through administering the test to a population with the same characteristics as the study participants. Then, the proverbs were used as the materials for the study intervention.

As for the materials used in the intervention, the selected proverbs were then prepared in three different ways. The first format presented the forty proverbs with their translations. For example:

The pen is mightier than the sword

زبان قلم از شمشیر برنده تر است

Barking Dogs seldom Bite

از آن نترس که های و هوی دارد

He Who Laughs Last, Laughs Best

شاهنامه آخرش خوش است

Good things come in a small package

فلفل نبین چه ریزه، بشکن ببین چه تیزه

Don't count your chickens before They're Hatched

جوجه را آخر پاییز می‌شمارند

The second format offered the definition of the proverbs in L2, for example:

Barking Dogs Seldom Bite

= people who threaten others usually do not hurt them.

He Who Laughs Last, Laughs Best

= the person who succeeds in making the last more has the most fun.

The pen is mightier than the sword

= the written word is more powerful than physical force

Procedure: In the first phase of the study, the OPT was administered to the participants to make sure that all of them were at the same level of language proficiency. Then, those students whose scores were between one SD above and below the mean were chosen as the participants of the study. The sixty selected participants were then assigned into three experimental groups each

comprising twenty people to experience different treatments. Then, the researcher-made proverb test was administered as the pre-test to make sure that the participants were not familiar with the proverbs. Afterwards, several proverbs that were familiar to the students were replaced by new ones or omitted to ensure the reliability of the results. The final version of the test included 40 items, whose reliability was tested through administering the test to a population with the same characteristics as the study participants. Then, the proverbs were used as the materials for the study intervention.

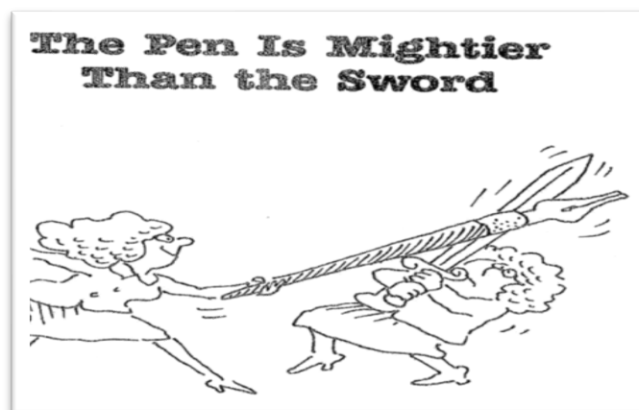


Figure.1: The third one used pictures for explaining the proverbs.

Source: (Collis, 2009)

Considering the aim of the study, the selected proverbs were then prepared in three different ways for the three groups. The first format presented the participants with the forty proverbs together with their translations. For each proverb, the teacher explained the Persian equivalent of the proverbs and had students practice them in pairs. In the second group who were taught the definition of the proverbs in L2, the teacher tried to explain the meaning of each proverb in English using explanation and description. In the third group, however, the participants received the pictorial mode of the proverbs which presented each proverb with its pictorial description. Of course, it should be mentioned that in all the three experimental groups, the teacher's explanations followed each proverb presentation. The treatment lasted 10 sessions in the three classes, each session one and a half hour. After the treatment, the same test used as the pre-test was presented to the three groups as the post-test to check the effect of each instructional procedure on the participants' level of proverbs mastery. The collected data were then analyzed by SPSS software.

Data Analysis: The collected data were analyzed using one-way ANOVA and paired-samples t-test which assume normality of the data. As displayed in Table 1 the

ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their standard errors were lower than +/- 1.96 for all tests.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics; Testing Normality Assumption.

Group	N	Skewness			Kurtosis			
		Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	Statistic	Std. Error	Ratio	
Translation	Placement	20	0.596	0.512	1.16	-1.114	0.992	-1.12
	Pretest	20	0.573	0.512	1.12	-0.451	0.992	-0.45
	Posttest	20	-0.221	0.512	-0.43	0.092	0.992	0.09
Equivalent	Placement	20	0.577	0.512	1.12	-0.156	0.992	-0.15
	Pretest	20	0.227	0.512	0.44	-0.598	0.992	-0.60
	Posttest	20	-0.099	0.512	-0.19	-0.919	0.992	-0.93
Pictorial	Placement	20	0.429	0.512	0.83	0.333	0.992	0.33
	Pretest	20	0.694	0.512	1.36	-0.552	0.992	-0.56
	Posttest	20	0.076	0.512	0.15	-0.521	0.992	-0.53

Source: The authors make the table.

One-way ANOVA also assumes homogeneity of variances which will be reported when discussing the main results.

General Language Proficiency Test (Placement Test):

A one-way analysis of variances was run to compare the translation; equivalent and pictorial groups' means on the placement test to confirm they were homogenous in terms of their general language proficiency prior to the main study. Before discussing the results, it should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's $F(2, 57) = .586, P = .560$) (Table 2).

Table 2. Test of Homogeneity of Variances; Placement test.

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
0.586	2	57	0.560

Source: The authors make the table

As displayed in Table 3, the translation ($M = 56.75, SD = 1.91$), equivalent ($M = 56.35, SD = 1.95$) and pictorial ($M = 56.20, SD = 1.67$) groups had almost the same means on the placement test.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics; Placement Test by Groups.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Translation	20	56.75	1.916	.428	55.85	57.65	55	60
equivalent	20	56.35	1.954	.437	55.44	57.26	55	60
pictorial	20	56.20	1.673	.374	55.42	56.98	55	60
Total	60	56.43	1.835	.237	55.96	56.91	55	60

Source: The authors make the table.

Based on the results displayed in Table 4 ($F(2, 57) = .471, P = .627, \omega^2 = .018$ representing a weak effect size), it can be concluded that there were no significant differences between the means of the three groups on

the placement. Thus, it can be claimed that they were homogeneous in terms of their general language proficiency prior to the main study.

See Table 4.

Table 4. One-Way ANOVA; Placement Test by Groups.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.233	2	1.617	0.471	0.627
Within Groups	195.500	57	3.430		
Total	198.733	59			

Source: The authors make the table.

Pretest of Proverbs: Also, a one-way analysis of variances was run to compare the three groups' means on the pretest of proverbs to check their homogeneity regarding their knowledge of English proverbs prior to the treatment. It should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's $F(2, 57) = 1.08, P = .345$) (Table 5).

Table 5. Test of Homogeneity of Variances; Pretest of Proverbs.

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.084	2	57	0.345

Source: The authors make the table.

As displayed in Table 6, the translation ($M = 4.20, SD = 3.33$), equivalent ($M = 4.20, SD = 2.82$) and pictorial ($M = 2.70, SD = 2.25$) groups had almost the same means on the pretest of proverbs.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics; Pretest of Proverbs by Groups.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Translation	20	4.20	3.334	0.746	2.64	5.76	0	11
equivalent	20	4.20	2.821	0.631	2.88	5.52	0	10
pictorial	20	2.70	2.250	0.503	1.65	3.75	0	7
Total	60	3.70	2.878	0.372	2.96	4.44	0	11

Source: The authors make the table.

Based on the results displayed in Table 7 ($F(2, 57) = 1.86, P = .164, \omega^2 = .028$ representing a weak effect size), it was concluded that the means of the three groups were not significantly different on the pretest of

proverbs. Thus, it can be claimed that they were homogenous in terms of their knowledge of English proverbs prior to the main study.

Table 7. One-Way ANOVA; Pretest of Proverbs by Groups.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	30.000	2	15.000	1.864	0.164
Within Groups	458.600	57	8.046		
Total	488.600	59			

Source: The authors make the table.

The First Null-Hypothesis: L1 translation does not have any significant impact on the teaching of Proverbs to EFL learners.

In order to examine the hypothesis, a paired-samples t-test was run to compare the L1 translation group's

means on the proverb pretest and posttest. The results indicated that the L1 translation group ($M = 25.20, SD = 8.26$) had higher mean on the posttest of English proverbs than the pretest ($M = 4.20, SD = 3.33$) (Table 8).

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics; Pretest and Posttest of English Proverbs (L1 Translation Group).

Tests		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Posttest	25.20	20	8.263	1.848
	Pretest	4.20	20	3.334	0.746

Source: the authors make the table.

The results of the paired-samples t-test ($t(19) = 12.58, p = .000, r = .945$ representing a large effect size) (Table 9) indicated that the L1 translation group had a

significantly higher mean on the posttest of English proverbs than the pretest. Therefore, the first null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 9. Paired-Samples t-test; Pretest and Posttest of English Proverbs (L1 Translation Group).

Paired Differences							
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
21.000	7.462	1.669	17.508	24.492	12.585	19	0.000

Source: The authors make the table.

The Second Null-Hypothesis: L2 equivalents do not have any significant impact on the teaching of Proverbs to EFL learners.

To test the above hypothesis, a paired-samples t-test was run on the L2 equivalents group's means on the proverb

pretest and posttest. The findings showed that the L2 equivalents group (M = 24.45, SD = 9.70) had higher mean on the posttest of English proverbs than pretest (M = 4.20, SD = 2.82).

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics; Pretest and Posttest of English Proverbs (L2 equivalents Group).

Tests		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
		Posttest	24.45	20	9.703
Pretest		4.20	20	2.821	0.631

Source: The author makes the table.

The results of the paired-samples t-test (t (19) = 9.81, p = .000, r = .945 representing a large effect size) (Table 11) indicated that the L2 equivalents group had a

significantly higher mean on the posttest of English proverbs than pretest. Hence, the second null-hypothesis was rejected.

Table 11. Paired-Samples t-test; Pretest and Posttest of English Proverbs (L2 equivalents Group).

Paired Differences							
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Lower	Upper			
20.250	9.227	2.063	15.931	24.569	9.814	19	0.000

Source: the authors make the table

The Third Null-Hypothesis: The pictorial mode does not have any significant impact on the teaching of Proverbs to EFL learners.

A paired-samples t-test was run to probe the third

null-hypothesis. As it was observed, the pictorial group (M = 21.70, SD = 7.96) had higher mean on the posttest of English proverbs than pretest (M = 2.70, SD = 2.25).

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics; Pretest and Posttest of English Proverbs (Picture Group).

Tests		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
		Posttest	21.70	20	7.968
Pretest		2.70	20	2.250	0.503

Source: The authors make the table.

The results of the paired-samples t-test (t (19) = 10.54, p = .000, r = .925 representing a large effect size) (Table 13) indicated that the pictorial group had a significantly

higher mean on the posttest of English proverbs than pretest and thus, the third null-hypothesis was safely rejected.

Table 13. Paired-Samples t-test; Pretest and Posttest of English Proverbs (Pictorial Group).

Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
19.000	8.059	1.802	15.228	22.772	10.544	19	0.000

Source: The authors make the table.

The Fourth Null Hypothesis

L1 translation, L2 equivalent and pictures do not have the same impact on the teaching of Proverbs to EFL learners. In order to compare the translation, equivalent and pictorial groups' means on the posttest of proverbs, a one-way analysis of variances was run. Before discussing the results, it should be mentioned that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Levene's $F(2, 57) = .527, P = .593$) (Table 14).

Table 14. Test of Homogeneity of Variances; Posttest of Proverbs

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
0.527	2	57	0.593

Source: The authors make the table.

As displayed in Table 15, the translation ($M = 25.20, SD = 8.26$), equivalent ($M = 24.45, SD = 9.70$) and pictorial ($M = 28.70, SD = 7.96$) groups had different means on the posttest of proverbs.

Table 15. Descriptive Statistics; Posttest of Proverbs by Groups.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Translation	20	25.20	8.263	1.848	21.33	29.07	8	40
equivalent	20	24.45	9.703	2.170	19.91	28.99	8	40
pictorial	20	28.70	7.968	1.782	17.97	25.43	7	35
Total	60	23.78	8.663	1.118	21.55	26.02	7	40

Source: The authors make the table.

Based on Table 16 ($F(2, 57) = .902, P = .412, \omega^2 = .003$ representing a weak effect size), there were significant differences between the means of the three groups on the posttest of proverbs and consequently, the third

null-hypothesis was confirmed. It can be stated that pictures had a more significant impact on the teaching of Proverbs to EFL learners than L1 translation and L2 equivalent.

Table 16. One-Way ANOVA; Posttest of Proverbs by Groups.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	135.833	2	67.917	0.902	0.412
Within Groups	4292.350	57	75.304		
Total	4428.183	59			

Source: The authors make the table

DISCUSSION

As it was mentioned, the main objective of the present study was to investigate the impact of using L1 translation, L2 equivalent and pictures on the teaching of Proverbs to EFL learners. To do so, sixty intermediate language learners who met the study requirements were selected as the main participants of the study. Then after, they were assigned into three groups to experience three different modes of instruction to set the stage for

further analyses. Before starting the treatment, a one-way ANOVA was run to compare the translation, equivalent and pictorial groups' means on the placement test to prove that they were homogeneous in terms of their general language proficiency prior to the main study. The results showed that there were no significant differences between the means of the three groups on the placement and it was assured that they were homogeneous in terms of their general language

proficiency prior to the treatment. Also, the results illustrated that there were no significant differences between the means of the three groups on the pretest of proverbs. Therefore, it was supposed that they were homogeneous in terms of their knowledge of English proverbs prior to the study.

Analysis of the first, second, and third research hypotheses indicated that all the three groups (L1 translation, L2 equivalent, and pictorial) groups had a significantly higher mean on the posttest of English proverbs than the pretest. Besides, examination of the fourth research hypothesis showed that there was significant differences between the means of the three groups on the posttest of proverbs. The results showed that the mean score of the pictorial group was significantly higher than the mean scores of the translation, equivalent groups on the posttest of proverbs. Therefore, it can be concluded that there were significant differences between the means of the three groups on the posttest of proverbs.

The findings of the present study illustrated that pictures and using visual representation had a more profound impact on EFL students' learning proverbs than L1 translation and L2 equivalent. The results are in line with those of Turkol (2003) who studied on proverb familiarity and interpretation task. She concluded that learners used semantic analysis in recalling the meanings of proverbs.

CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of the present study was to investigate the impact of using L1 translation, L2 equivalent and pictures on the teaching of Proverbs to EFL learners. The results of the study showed that there were significant differences between the means of the three groups on the posttest of proverbs. Also, it is noteworthy that pictures and using visual representation had a more profound impact on EFL students' learning proverbs than L1 translation and L2 equivalent.

Pictures and pictorial representation of materials are shown to enhance language learners' comprehension as well as retention of proverbs (Fotovatnia & Khaki, 2012). This is in line with what Mayer (2005) called "the generative theory of multimedia teaching". He believed that when materials are presented to learners through different channels of visual-pictorial as well as auditory-verbal, they can use the data received via each channel for more efficient information processing. As he claimed,

learners experiencing this type of learning will show the best academic results. Chong (2001) also supports the same findings, and Norrick (2007) and Zarei and Salimi (2012).

Sadeghilar (1993) investigated on the effect of using translation on learning idioms and found that although it might result in negative transfer between similar idioms between two languages, it can be helpful in learning different idioms. Sadeghi (1995) also concluded that more meaning-based approaches are needed to enhance Iranian L2 learners' comprehension. For the same reason, Fotovatnia and Khaki (2012) made a comparison of the effects of using translation, L2 definition, and pictures on idiom learning. Then found that when verbal and visual channels were used simultaneously, idioms were recalled and understood better and that the group using pictures showed a much better performance. Therefore, they concluded that using pictorial mode in teaching idioms could enhance their retention. However, it should be noted that they reported dissimilarity between the translation and L2 definition groups in terms of meaning comprehension.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results of the present study can be beneficial for language teachers. Understanding cultural proverbs is a valuable tool for EFL students to improve their intercultural communication. They can improve the quality of education without much burden and put a share of instruction's responsibility on the learners' shoulders involving them in the learning cultural process. This study illustrated that if language teachers incorporate proverbs in the materials they present in their classes, learners would benefit more from the environment to improve their cultural knowledge. It also leads to more learner-centred teaching-learning atmosphere.

Furthermore, English language learners can benefit from the results of the present study. Teaching culture can make the students think intensively, concentrate on learning processes, enjoy their lesson, and got more motivation, interest, and confidence through and during their learning. By doing so, they can express their ideas and think in a more efficient way. Knowledge of proverbs and idiomatic use of language can play a key role in setting the ground to increase creativity and courage in EFL learners so that they have more to discuss with their classmates and friends. It can also lead to increasing their enthusiasm to raise questions when they get in a hole in their courses.

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