THE EFFECT OF PROVERBS ON LEARNING VOCABULARY THROUGH VISUAL ORGANIZERS

Elham Baharian/ MA TEFL

Department of English, Yazd Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Yazd, Iran

Mohammad Javad Rezai

Assistant Professor, TEFL Department of English, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran

ABSTRACT: *The acquisition of vocabulary items constitutes a major bulk of second language learning. The studies investigating the most appropriate method of presenting and teaching vocabulary have proliferated in recent years. However, the effect of proverbs on the acquisition of lexical items has not been explored yet. This investigation attempted to explore the influence of learning vocabulary through proverbs and to find out whether proverbs can be used to improve vocabulary learning through time. In addition, the study explored to what extent the visual organizers and picture cues can facilitate the learning of lexical items and their retention. To this end, 90 pre-intermediate EFL learners were assigned to two experimental and one control groups. The first experimental group was instructed through proverb whereas the second experimental group was instructed via proverbs accompanied by pictures in five different sessions. Results indicated that the proverb plus picture and the proverb group outperformed the control group in the immediate perception and production tasks. Additionally, the proverb plus picture had the highest gain of word and retention in the delayed tasks. The study reveals the effectiveness and higher rate of retention of learning lexical items through proverbs especially via pictures compared to the traditional method.*

KEYWORDS: Vocabulary learning, Proverb, Retention, Picture

INTRODUCTION

In the literature of English language teaching and learning, a recurring theme has been the neglect of vocabulary. It was often given little priority in language programs and was often left to look after itself and received only incidental attention in textbooks and language programs (Richards and Renandya, 2002). French (1983) believes that vocabulary has been neglected in the past decades because (a) those who were involved in the teacher-preparation programs during the past few decades felt that grammar should be emphasized more than vocabulary, (b) specialists in methodology believed that students would make mistakes in sentence construction if too many words were learned before the basic grammar had been mastered, and (c) those who gave advice to teachers said that word meanings can be learned only through experience and cannot be taught in the classroom.

More recently, however, a number of researchers have become interested in vocabulary instruction. They have come to realize that vocabulary is an important area worthy of effort and investigation. It has, consequently, gained popularity in the general field of English language teaching and learning (Coady and Huckin, 1997; Richards & Renandya, 2002). There is now a general agreement among vocabulary specialists that vocabulary is at the heart of communicative competence (Coady & Huckin, 1997).

Nowadays, it is widely accepted that vocabulary teaching should be part of the syllabus, and taught on a constant and systematic basis. Understanding how our memory works might help us create more effective ways of teaching vocabulary. Research in the area, cited by Gairns (1986), offers us some insight into this process. It seems that learning new items involves storing them first in our short-term memory, and afterwards in the long-term memory. We do not control this process consciously, but there seems to be some important clues to consider. First, retention in short-term memory is not effective if the number of chunks of information exceeds seven. Therefore, this suggests that in a given class we should not aim at teaching more than this number. However, our long-term memory can hold much more information than what we use. Research also suggests that our 'mental lexicon' is highly- organized and efficient, and that semantically related items are stored together. Word frequency is another factor that affects storage, as the most frequently used items are easier to retrieve.

Vocabulary learning strategy (VLS) is an approach which facilitates vocabulary learning and has attracted considerable attention. One of the problems that students mostly face is that they easily forget the newly learned words. To solve this problem, researchers have attempted to examine different VLSs. Mnemonic devices or strategies have proved to make substantial contribution in this regard (Farjami, 2007). One of Visual Mnemonics is pictures in which new words are usually paired with their definitions or equivalents. They can be, however, better learned if they are paired with pictures (Thompson, 1987). Gairns and Redman (1986) believe that objects and pictures can facilitate recall. Wright (1989) also believes that meaning cannot be derived only from verbal language. Pictures and objects not only can be used to give meaning and information but they also can be used to the motivation and interest of the students. Using this method, a picture can be used to make the meaning of the word clear. It can sometimes be accompanied by its definition. This method can, however, be used with concrete words and usually with elementary or pre-intermediate students.

Visual organizers are used to improve students' comprehension of stories, as well as build writing and vocabulary skills. They help students to visualize the relationships between words and their possible meanings and to process the information at higher levels of comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. By organizing and processing data in this way, one can better understand and recall the information.

Teaching vocabulary through using proverbs can be an effective technique. Proverbs belong to the traditional verbal folklore genres, and the wisdom of proverbs has served as timeless guidance in social interaction for people throughout the world. Proverbs are concise, easy to remember and useful in every situation in life due to their content of everyday experiences. It is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in fixed, metaphorical, and retainable forms which are handed down from generation to generation (Mieder 1985). A proverb is usually recognized by the fixed, often short form and contains frequently used vocabulary, and therefore is quite easy to memorize.

As teaching aids, English proverbs are expected to improve learners' vocabulary learning. In this research, the effect of visual organizers such as pictures in learning vocabulary through proverbs is investigated to determine whether it improves vocabulary learning or not. Some researchers study proverbs as a way of teaching expressive writing, improving reading comprehension and abstract reasoning, advancing cultural awareness, etc., but there is no further research on learning vocabulary through proverbs. If proverbs are presented along with visual organizers such as picture cues, they can affect the vocabulary acquisition.

Therefore, this research intends to find efficient ways of learning vocabularies through proverbs and visual organizers which could help learners overcome forgetting and retaining problems. The present study investigates the role of visual organizers especially pictures in learning vocabulary through proverbs.

LITERATURE

Read (2004) noted that in studies on L2 vocabulary learning, a distinction has long been made between incidental and intentional learning, with the main focus on the former, especially exploring the extent to which students can learn vocabulary items incidentally while engaging in other language-learning activities. Furthermore, to augment incidental vocabulary learning in the ESL classroom, it would be effective for teachers to provide students with target vocabulary items through tasks, as well as to ask them to read only the texts that include the target words. For example, students can read and retell a text generatively, that is, in their own words (Joe, 1998). Also, in order to learn unknown words while reading a text, students can access a dictionary with various look-up options such as pictorial and verbal cues (Laufer and Hill, 2000).

With regard to vocabulary retention, Hulstijn (1992) demonstrated that target vocabulary items were retained significantly longer when their meanings were correctly inferred than when explained by their synonyms. Joe (1995) argued that the retention of unfamiliar words was significantly facilitated when students engaged in a text-based task that demanded a higher level of generativity. Similarly, Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) demonstrated that EFL students who participated in a composition task could retain target words better than those engaged in a reading comprehension or fill-in task, which suggests that students who were involved in higher levels of vocabulary production-processing remembered target words better than those who were not. Plass, Chun, Mayer, and Leutner (1998) stated that students remembered unknown words better when provided with both pictorial and written annotations than when provided with only one kind or no annotation.

Considerable research has recently been conducted into the effectiveness of vocabulary teaching and learning through various activities or tasks. Lee and Muncie (2006) showed that a post-reading composition task helped ESL students improve the productive use of higher-level target vocabulary. Newton (1995) pointed out that students made more vocabulary gains when engaging in communicative tasks that demanded interactions than when negotiating word meanings explicitly. Wesche and Paribakht (2000) demonstrated that students learned vocabulary more effectively when they engaged in text-based vocabulary exercises in addition to reading a text than when they read multiple texts without exercises, because in the latter case, they could learn not only target words, but also their lexical features. Further, Folse (2006) suggested that how frequently students retrieved unfamiliar words influenced their retention more than how deeply they were involved in processing them, which demonstrates that students could improve their retention of new target words more while engaging in multiple fill-in-the blank exercises than while writing one original sentence with each target word. Finally, Nassaji (2003) suggested that ESL students might grope ineffectively for lexical inferences about word meanings from context, so that teachers should provide them with a chance to identify and define exact meanings for unknown words.

According to Solso (1995), mnemonics are techniques or devices, either verbal or visual in nature, that serve to improve the storage of new information, and the recall of information contained in memory. Mnemonics have been proven to be extremely effective in helping people remember things (Bulgren, Schumaker & Deshler, 1994). If material is presented in a way which fits in or relates meaningfully to what is already known, then it will be retained for relatively long periods of time and thus retrieval through verbal or visual clues becomes quite easy. In other words, by using mnemonic strategies, teachers can relate new information to information students already have stored in their long-term memory. For vocabulary learning, they are used to relate the word to some previously learnt information, using some form of imagery or grouping (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 1991). Thompson (1987) similarly acknowledges the usefulness of mnemonic devices by stating that they can help learners learn faster and recall better by integration of new material into existing cognitive units and by providing retrieval cues. Mnemonic devices are proved to be effective in all ages. They are, however, more useful for low level students because they are involved mostly in activities requiring them to remember and recall information (Levin, 1993).

New words are usually paired with their definitions or equivalents. They can be, however, better, learned if they are paired with pictures (Thompson, 1987). Gairns and Redman (1986) believe that objects and pictures can facilitate recall. Wright (1989) also believes that meaning cannot be derived only from verbal language. Pictures and objects can not only be used to give meaning and information but they also can be used to the motivation and interest of the students. Using this method, a picture can be used to make the meaning of the word clear. It can sometimes be accompanied by its definition. This method can, however, be used with concrete words and usually with elementary or pre-intermediate students.

Paivio (1971) proposed a 'dual-coding theory' arguing that there are two cognitive subsystems in the human brain: visual and verbal. They exist independently, which means that visual and verbal information are processed along two different channels. However, the two memory channels are interconnected, and therefore information that is presented through both visual and verbal codes is likely to be stored and retrieved more easily than information presented through one modality only.

A number of studies have looked for ways of accommodating the principles of dual-coding theory in the teaching of idiomatic language. As the meaning of the idioms can often be derived from the original, literal usage of the phrases (Boers, Demecheleer & Eyckmans, 2004), it was expected that pictorial support would facilitate the acquisition of idiomatic language. However, experimental research has produced mixed results. Boers, Lindstromberg, Littlemore, Stengers and Eyckmans (2008) conducted a number of controlled experiments that examined the mnemonic effectiveness of pictorial elucidation (a process of stimulating associative links between language items and images through the use of schematic drawings or pictures). In the experiment that specifically focused on idiom learning, they found that using pictures and verbal explanations had a positive effect on the retention of idiom meaning in L2 but a limited, and sometimes even negative effect on the retention of idiom form, especially for learners who were high-imagers.

According to Raimes (1983), pictures as one of the advance organizers can help the teachers and students in teaching and learning vocabulary, and other components of language. As a matter of fact, pictures can help students imagine the real object. In short, the concept of picture

is the shared experience of many people because of their matching ability which enables them to match the words with pictures. It should be mentioned that pictures as mental representation of mind can better affect learning. Pictures are used in the classrooms as teaching devices and can be found to give practice in most skills and components and in most stages of teaching. Allen (1983) also has shown that the more modalities are involved in association, the more readily items will become available in various situations. Items should therefore be presented in association with visual representations (pictures, objects), aurally, and in association with activities of all kinds.

Boers, Piquer Priz, Stengers and Eyckmans (2009) suggest that pictorial elucidation helps learners comprehend and remember the meaning of second language (L2) idioms. They addressed the question whether it also helps retention of the form of idioms, i.e. their precise lexical composition. The results suggest that the addition of pictorial elucidation contributes little to learners' retention of linguistic form.Zorana Vasiljević (2013) showed that the presentation of both verbal and visual information can promote the formation of memory traces and consequently, the retention of information. The results of earlier studies that examined the effects of pictorial elucidation on idiom learning suggested that pictures may facilitate comprehension but contributed little to learners' retention of linguistic form and even interfered with it.

Use of proverbs as part of formulaic language, can enable fluent and natural language production (Yorio, 1980) and therefore, teaching proverbs can help to produce language more fluently and naturally which can in turn increase motivation (Porto, 1998). Although non-native speakers or language learners avoid using idiomatic expressions and prefer literal and direct language items (O'Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter, 2007), "avoiding the use of idioms gives language a bookish, stilted, unimaginative tone" (Cooper, 1999, p.258), which highlights the importance of learning idiomatic expressions to accomplish command of authentic language. Comprehension of texts can be increased through the knowledge of proverbs as part of idiomatic expressions and using them can make learners' verbal and written communication more effective (Vanyushkina-Holt, 2005).

Proverbs are effective and practical tools to teach vocabulary, to exemplify and practice grammar points, to show creative use of language, and to teach and practice pronunciation because of their musical quality (Nuessel, 2003).Sudiran (2007) investigated the role of proverb in the development of writing skills. As proverbs contain moral value, they can be used as teaching aids because they can motivate the students in order to learn writing seriously. So, English proverbs are expected to motivate students in mastering writing course. Lastly, the response of the students to the use of English proverbs was positive. Most students think they can write a good paragraph with an English proverb as a topic sentence.

A small number of researchers have targeted the effect of proverbs on learning English vocabulary, and to the best knowledge of the researcher none has been conducted regarding its effect on learning vocabulary. Looking forward to open the door of practical studies toward this issue, the researcher confined herself to make an experimental investigation on the effect of proverbs on learning vocabulary through visual organizers i.e. pictures by Persian EFL learners. To the end, the following research questions were entertained in the study.

1.   Does teaching vocabulary through proverbs affect vocabulary mastery and retention?

2.   Do visual organizers which promote the use of proverbs affect vocabulary mastery?
3.   Is there any significant effect in learning vocabulary through proverbs with/without visual organizers?

METHODOLOGY

Participants
The target population for this study was 90 EFL learners who were selected based on their level of proficiency from Safir Language Academy, one of the Language Institutes in Yazd in which the communicative approach is employed. They were all females students, randomly selected in the age range of 17 to 26. These subjects were chosen based on their performance on Oxford Quick Placement test (2001). The test contains 60 items on vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension. Those who scored between 28 and 36 were selected as pre-intermediate learners. The participants were divided into 3 groups, each having 30 students. As in Safir Language Academy it is not allowed to have more than 17 students per class, the researcher considered two classes per group to have 30 students which is the minimum effective sample size in experimental study. Most of students studied different majors at the university level and had passed 6 terms of elementary which was 120 sessions of 1 hour and 45 minutes, three times a week. Most of the participants were from medium and high socioeconomic status families.

Instruments
Four instruments were employed in this study. They included pretest, treatment material, post test and delayed post test. One of the instruments used in this experimental research was pretest which was prepared beforehand. In the pretest, the selected vocabularies were tested before carrying out the study, to make sure that the learners were not familiar with such lexical items. Words that were intended to be used in the study were given to the students who were asked to write the Persian equivalents. Any word known by the subjects taking part in the study was set excluded from the main study.

Twenty proverbs were chosen from the book entitled "Interesting Stories to Learn Proverbs" by Murthi (2004), consisting of 30 words which were selected to be taught and to be tested. The following is the list of the words which were taught:
-       *haste , waste, charity, bite, chew, fight*
-       *goose, lay, obey, hang, spurn, fury*
-       *beard, preach, necessity, invention, quisling, pride*
-       *steady, tact, deserve, crown, triumph, truth*
-       *unity, strength, wisdom, common sense, hatch, kindness*
A sample of the proverbs presented to the subjects in the two experimental groups is as follows. The intended lexical items are underlined.
1-   *Charity begins at home*
2-   *Don't bite more than you can chew*
3-   *Necessity is the mother of invention*
4-   *Haste makes waste*
5-   *Unity is strength*

Procedure

There were three groups of EFL females learners who were attending English classes three times a week. Each session lasted one hour and forty five minutes. There were 20 sessions out of which the treatment was done in 5 sessions. The pretest was administered to 90 EFL learners to find out whether the learners knew the determined words or not. The learners who were familiar with the words were excluded from the analysis. The first group was taught the selected words through the determined proverbs in context without presenting any visual organizers, so as to determine whether learning words through proverbs would be efficient or not. The second group was treated similar to the first experimental group but they were exposed to visual organizers in context in which the story of that particular proverb was accompanying the pictures. The third group was taught the vocabularies in context in a traditional way not via proverbs and pictures. Then, the immediate post test in perception as well as production was given after each session, at the end of the treatments, to analyze the effects. There were 6 perception tests in the form of multiple choice questions and 6 production tests in which participants were asked to write the meanings in Persian. A delayed post test was also given two weeks later to explore the retention of the presented vocabularies. The results of the first two groups were studied to verify the efficiency of visual organizers in the acquisition of vocabulary. Also, the findings of the three groups were analyzed to see how much learning through proverbs was efficient in enhancing vocabulary knowledge.

RESULTS

Immediate Post-test Results

In Table 1, the descriptive statistics of the accurately recalled words in the comprehension task for the immediate test administered are presented.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Proverb	30	28.73	1.77	25.00	30.00
proverb Picture picture	+ 30	29.17	1.23	25.00	30.00
Control	30	24.63	4.00	15.00	30.00

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of recalled words (Immediate perception post test)

As Table 1 shows, the group of subjects taught by means of proverbs and picture recalled the most and got the highest mean (M = 29.17, SD = 1.23). The lowest mean score was obtained by the control group (M = 24.63, SD = 4.00). The proverb group was similar to the proverb + picture group and ranked the second position (M = 28.73, SD = 1.77). Post hoc comparisons using Tamhane test indicated that the mean score for proverb plus picture and control group (Mean difference = 4.10) was significantly different from each other (p = .0001). The same result was almost found between the control group and proverb (Mean difference = 4.10). However, the proverb group was not significantly different from the proverb plus picture (Mean difference = 0.43, p = 0.618).

Delayed Post-test Results

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics for accurately recalled words in each group on the delayed perception test.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Proverb	30	24.77	2.25	19.00	28.00
proverb + picture	30	28.23	1.54	24.00	30.00
Control	30	12.97	3.02	8.00	21.00

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of recalled words on Delayed Perception Task

Table 2 shows that the control group recalled the least number of words and the difference between the mean of the control group and all the other two groups was quite large. There was a big decline in the means for recalled words in control group. The mean of the control group declined from (24.63) in the immediate test to (12.97) in the delayed test, showing that the retention of words for this population was rather poor. The mean of the proverb group declined from (28.73) in the immediate test to (24.77) in the delayed test. However, the mean of the proverb plus picture group slightly declined from (29.16) in the immediate test to (28.23) in the delayed test. Compared with the other tested groups, the mean for the proverb plus picture group was the highest, indicating that this group had less difficulty recalling words.

Table 3 explores the results through Tamhane post-hoc test for the delayed perception test of the three groups, examining the relationship between the mean scores for all the three groups.

	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tamhane	Proverb	proverb + picture	-3.47*	.49912	.000	-4.6986	-2.2348
		Control	11.80*	.68844	.000	10.1033	13.4967
	proverb + picture	Control	15.27*	.61991	.000	13.7269	16.8064

Table 3 Multiple Comparison for group Performance on Delayed Perception Test

Table 3 reveals that the difference between the means for the proverb plus picture and control group was significant ($p = .001$). It also shows that difference between the means for the proverb and control group was significant (P = .000). Unlike the immediate post test results, the difference between proverb plus picture and proverb (Mean difference = 3.47) turned out to be significant (.001).

Immediate and Delayed Post test Perception Results

A mixed between-within subjects ANOVA was conducted to assess the impact of time on the participant's performance in the perception task. The results of ANOVA (Table 4) revealed significant interaction between time and these two tasks, Wilk's Lambda = .18, $F_{(2, 87)}$ =

1.96, p = .001. There was a substantial main effect for time, Wilk's Lambda = .12, F (1, 87) = 5.86, p < .0005, indicating that the three groups as a whole performed differently across time.

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time	Wilks' Lambda	.129	5.860E2ᵃ	1.000	87.000	.000	.871
Time+ Group	Wilks' Lambda	.182	1.961E2ᵃ	2.000	87.000	.000	.818

Table 4 ANOVA Results of Participant's Performance in the Perception Task

Post-hoc results using scheffe adjustment showed that there was a significant difference between all the groups according to the time effect (see Table 5).

	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Scheffe	Proverb	proverb + picture	-1.95*	.57965	.005	-3.3936	-.5064
		Control	7.95*	.57965	.000	6.5064	9.3936
	proverb + picture	Control	9.90*	.57965	.000	8.4564	11.3436

Table 5 Multiple Comparisons for Groups' performance on Immediate and Delayed Post Test

Immediate Post test Translation Results

Table 6 shows the mean scores of the words accurately recalled for each group on the immediate test in the translation task**.**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Proverb	30	28.40	1.63	25.00	30.00
Pro verb + picture	30	28.77	1.61	23.00	30.00
Control	30	23.20	3.97	13.00	29.00

Table 1.7 Descriptive statistics of immediate translation Task

The results of Table 6 showed that the proverb plus picture (28.77) and proverb group (28.40) outperformed the control group since the mean of the recalled translation words was the lowest (23.20).

Table 7 displays the result of the post hoc test performed on the data.

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tamhane	Proverb	proverb + picture	-.37	.41876	.767	-1.3963	.6629
		Control	5.20*	.78198	.000	3.2483	7.1517
	proverb + picture	Control	5.57*	.78063	.000	3.6178	7.5155

Table 7 Multiple Comparisons for Groups Performance on Immediate Translation Task

As it is shown in the above table, the differences between the control and proverb groups and the control and proverb plus picture groups were significant ($p = .001$). However, the difference between proverb and proverb plus picture did not turn out to be significant ($p=.76$, $p<.05$).

Delayed Post Test Translation Results

Table 8 shows the mean number of words recalled on the delayed test of translation. The proverb plus picture group (M = 27.31, SD = 1.51) was in the first rank and got the highest mean score. The proverb group (M = 24.53, SD = 2.34) was ranked in the second position. The lowest mean score was obtained by the control group (M = 11.40, SD = 2.55).

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Proverb	30	24.53	2.34	19.00	28.00
proverb + picture	29	27.31	1.51	22.00	30.00
Control	30	11.40	2.55	7.00	16.00

Table 8 Descriptive Data in Delayed Translation Test

Table 9 displays the results of post-hoc test using Tamhane adjustment.

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tamhane	Proverb	proverb + picture	-2.78*	.51222	.000	-4.0425	-1.5115
		Control	13.13*	.63306	.000	11.5765	14.6901
	proverb + picture	Control	15.91*	.54456	.000	14.5626	17.2581

Table 9 Multiple Comparisons for Groups' Performance on Delayed Translation Test

Table 9 shows statistically significant difference between the participants' performance in the delayed translation test. All the groups were significantly different from each other ($p = .001$)

25

All in all, the results showed the superior effect of the proverb plus picture group in the long run.

Immediate and Delayed Translation Results

A mixed between-within subjects of variance was conducted to assess the impact of time on the participant's performance in the translation tasks (see Table 10). The result of ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between time and group. [Wilk's Lambda = .19, F (2, 86) = 1.73, p = .001]. There was a substantial main effect for time, Wilk's Lambda = .12, F (1, 87) = 5.86, p < .0005, indicating that the participants displayed a lower mean accuracy in the delayed post-test tasks.

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time	Wilks' Lambda	.129	5.822E 2[a]	1.000	86.000	.000	.871
Time Group	* Wilks' Lambda	.199	1.735E 2[a]	2.000	86.000	.000	.801

Table 10 Interaction Effect of Time and Participant's Performance in Translation Task

The results of the post-hoc test using Scheffe adjustment are presented in Table 11 below. Table 11 shows that there was a significant difference across the groups in terms of time effect.

	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Scheffe	Proverb	proverb + picture	-1.5851[*]	.56334	.023	-2.9883	-.1818
		Control	9.1667[*]	.55854	.000	7.7753	10.5580
	proverb + picture	Control	10.7517[*]	.56334	.000	9.3485	12.1550

Table 11 Multiple Comparison for Group's Performance

DISCUSSION

In the following subsections, three issues, namely teaching vocabulary through proverbs, teaching vocabulary through proverbs plus picture and comparison of proverb with proverb plus picture will be explored.

Teaching vocabulary through proverbs

A comparison of immediate perception and immediate production tasks for the control group as well as the proverb group showed that in both tasks the proverb group had the higher gain of words as well as the higher rate of retention.

In the delayed comprehension task, the proverb group outperformed (M = 24.76) the control group which obtained the lowest mean score (M = 12.96). All the groups were significantly different from each other in the posttest. It proves that the proverb had a higher gain of the words as well as a higher rate of retention comparing to the control group.In the delayed translation task, the proverb group obtained a higher mean score (M = 24.53) compared to the control group (M = 11.40). Concerning the delayed perception and delayed production, the proverb group outperformed the control group with a significant difference. Therefore, the proverb group had a higher gain of words and rate of retention across time.Hence, the results indicated that teaching vocabulary through proverbs improves learning and has a positive effect on vocabulary acquisition.

The L2 learners showed better results in the immediate test in sharp contrast with the delayed tests and the difference between the mean scores was statistically significant in all cases. This could be explained by the forgetting curve. According to Linton (1975) people start forgetting seconds after they see or hear an even. Forgetting takes place early after learning and then slows down. The amount of information retained is high during the early time of learning and then goes down rapidly. Older or earlier pieces of information are covered by newer ones and therefore become lost. This is called interference theory. Another reason for drop-off of results could be that learners did not review the lists between the immediate and the delayed tests.
 Moreover, these findings confirming the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary through proverb were expected according to the findings of certain researchers about proverbs and their characteristics. Proverbs are useful expressions in the teaching of language components, namely vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Proverbs provide opportunities to acquire new and frequently-used vocabulary items and to learn other meanings of the known words (Rowland, 1926). In addition, it is an important vocabulary building skill to understand and create figurative extensions for a word in English (Lazar, 1996), which can be achieved through the study of metaphorical proverbs. Since proverbs are easy to learn and remember due to their form and rhythmic nature, learning one proverb can result in the acquisition of a couple of words.

Its external features are also named by some scholars as poetic features, prosodic devices, stylistic features, poetic devices and rhetorical techniques (Mieder & Holmes, 2000; Norrick 1985). These features give proverbs a literary value, make them easy to remember and memorize and help them gain proverbial status (Mieder, 2004). The results are also in line with Boer (2000) who indicated that a lexical organization along such metaphoric themes or source domains can facilitate retention of unfamiliar figurative expressions.

Teaching Vocabulary through Proverb plus Picture
The proverb plus picture group (M = 29.16) outperformed the control group (M = 24.63) in their judgment of accuracy of recalling words in the immediate perception test. The result of the first ANOVA proved that there existed a significant difference between the proverb plus picture and the control group. In the immediate translation task, the proverb plus picture (28.20) significantly outperformed the control group (23.20).

In the delayed perception test, the proverb plus picture group (28.23) outperformed the control group (12.96) with the mean difference of 15.27. The control group got the lowest mean score and the proverb plus picture got the highest mean score. In the delayed translation task, the proverb plus picture group (M = 27.31) got the highest mean score and the lowest mean score

27

obtained by the control group (M = 11.40). The post-hoc test revealed a significant difference between the participants' performance in the delayed translation test and superior effect of the proverb plus picture group across time. Hence, presenting proverbs via pictures had a positive effect on the learners' memory.

These findings are also in line with Paivio (1971) who proposed a 'dual-coding theory' arguing that there are two cognitive subsystems in the human brain: visual and verbal which exist independently. Therefore, when the two memory channels are interconnected, the information that is presented through both visual and verbal codes is likely to be stored and retrieved more easily than the information presented through one modality only. In addition, Plass, Chun, Mayer, and Leutner (1998) stated that learners remembered unknown words better when provided with both pictorial and written annotations than when administered with only one kind or no annotations. Learners learn better if they are paired with pictures.
Comparison of Proverb vs. Proverb plus Picture

The results of the study revealed that the proverb plus picture group (M= 29.16) outperformed the proverb group (M = 28.73) in the immediate perception test. However, there was not a significant difference between the proverb group and the proverb plus picture. In the immediate translation task, the proverb plus picture (M = 28.76) obtained a slightly higher mean score compared to the proverb group (M = 28.40). Nonetheless, the difference between the proverb group and the proverb plus picture group did not turn out to be significant ($p = .76$, $p > .05$). Therefore, there was not a significant difference between the proverb group and the proverb plus picture in both immediate perception and production tasks, although the proverb plus picture had a slightly higher gain of words and rate of retention compared to the proverb group. In the delayed comprehension task, the proverb plus picture group (M= 28.23) significantly outperformed the proverb group (M = 24.76). It proves that the proverb plus picture not only had a higher gain of the words but also a higher rate of retention compared to the proverb group. The same results were obtained in the delayed translation task. The proverb plus picture significantly got the higher mean score (M = 27.31) compared to the proverb group (M = 24.53 The post-hoc test showed statistically significant difference between the participants' performance in the delayed translation test and the superior effect of the proverb plus picture across time.

The above mentioned results, in the immediate and delayed perception tasks clearly show that teaching vocabulary through proverbs and via visual organizers is effective in learning vocabulary acquisition and retention. All in all, the results indicated that teaching vocabulary through proverbs and visual organizers improves learning and has a positive effect on vocabulary acquisition. The words in the control group were the least to be recalled in all cases whereas the scores obtained from the proverb plus picture in both delayed perception and translation tasks were higher than the proverb and control group

The fact that the proverb and proverb plus picture recalled the words higher than the control group can be accounted by the fact that presenting the proverbs especially via visual organizers like pictures to L2 learners actually facilitates vocabulary acquisition compared to the teaching in isolation. So these results are in accordance with Raimes (1983), stating that pictures as one of the advance organizers can help the teachers and students in teaching and learning vocabulary, and other components of language. Pictures can motivate students and nowadays, motivation is found to be an important factor in learning. Akbari (2008) concluded that the

contribution of pictures in teaching vocabulary items to elementary Iranian EFL students leads to a higher level of vocabulary improvement. According to Solso (1995), mnemonics are techniques or devices, either verbal or visual in nature, that serves to improve the storage of new information, and the recall of information contained in memory. Mnemonics have been proven to be extremely effective in helping people remember things (Bulgren, Schumaker & Deshler, 1994).). Gairns and Redman (1986) believe that objects and pictures can facilitate recall. Wright (1989) also believes that meaning cannot be derived only from verbal language. Pictures and objects can not only be used to give meaning and information but they can also be used to investigate the motivation and interest of the learners.

IMPLICATION TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The finding of this research is of high importance from a pedagogical point of view in giving practical implications for EFL learners, teachers, material developers, curriculum designers, and applied linguists in developing new idea concerning this issue. It could help them in their plans to introduce new vocabulary items in their courses. It can also be worthwhile for language teachers, specially Iranian teachers, since the present study is conducted in the context of Iranian learners of English, the purpose of which is to provide some guidelines for improving or changing the vocabulary teaching methods used for a long time in their educational settings. It is hoped that the finding of the present study would raise the awareness of language pedagogues and EFL teachers in paying more attention to benefits of using proverbs. It is expected that language teachers take advantage of these discrepancies to improve the processes of teaching and learning vocabulary through proverbs and visual organizers.

CONCLUSION

The study findings revealed that the proverb plus picture and the proverb group outperformed the control group with a significant difference. Therefore, teaching vocabulary through proverbs has a positive effect in vocabulary mastery and retention compared to the traditional method. The immediate tasks results displayed that the proverb plus picture had the highest gain of words compared to the proverb group but there was not a significant difference between these two methods. So, using proverb plus pictures may not have a significant superiority in the short run compared to the proverb group. However, the delayed tasks revealed that the proverb plus picture had a superiority over the proverb group across time with a significant difference. Hence, employing the visual organizers is effective on vocabulary mastery and retention across time.
Future Research

There are still other issues that need more investigation in order to provide more insights into this topic which will help those interested in the field of second language vocabulary learning. Here, a number of steps are suggested that help to explore the issue of learning through proverbs in more depth.
1. This study was conducted on female learners only; further research might be conducted on male learners.
2. This study had students from pre-intermediate level. Further studies can be conducted on learners of higher and lower levels of English language proficiency.
3. This study used four proverbs consisting of 30 words. Further researchers may increase the number of words in lists.

4. Since this study only tested subjects twice with a two- week interval, further researches might consider testing subjects over longer periods of time to investigate the effect of different methods of teaching and to measure the ensuing forgetting curve after that.

5. Various other techniques of vocabulary learning can be used in further studies and compare the results with the current techniques to find out which ones are more effective.

6. Further research can be carried out using proverbs to investigate its effect in developing writing skills and grammar.

REFERENCE

Akbari, O. (2008). Teaching vocabulary items through contextualization and picture to elementary iranian EFL students. *Asian EFL Journal, 10*(3), 53-77.

Allen, V.F. (1983). *Techniques in Teaching Vocabulary* .Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Boers, F. (2000). Metaphor awareness and vocabulary retention. *Applied Linguistics, 21*(4), 553-571.

Boers, F., Demecheleer, M., & Eyckmans, J. (2004). Cross-cultural variation as a variable in comprehending and remembering figurative idioms. *European Journal of English Studies, 8*(3), 375-388.

Boers, F., Lindstromberg, S., Littlemore, J., Stengers, H., & Eyckmans, J. (2008). Variables in the mnemonic effectiveness of pictorial elucidation. *Applications of Cognitive Linguistics, 6*, 189-116.

Boers, F., Píriz, A. M. P., Stengers, H., & Eyckmans, J. (2009). Does pictorial elucidation foster recollection of idioms? *Language Teaching Research, 13*(4), 367-382.

Bulgren, J. A., Schumaker, J. B., & Deshler, D. D. (1994). The effects of a recall enhancement routine on the test performance of secondary students with and without learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 9(1), 2-11.

Coady, J., & Huckin, T. (Eds.). (1997). *Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition: A Rationale for Pedagogy*. Cambridge University Press.

Cooper, T. C. (1999). Processing of idioms by L2 learners of English. *TESOL Quarterly, 33*(2), 233-262.

Farjami, H. (2007). Picture production and picture perception: comparing two modes of practicing concrete vocabulary. *IJAL, 10 (1), 1-14*.

Folse, K. S. (2006). The effect of type of written exercise on L2 vocabulary retention. *TESOL Quarterly, 40*(2), 273-293.

French, A. V. (1983). Techniques in teaching vocabulary. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gairns, R. Redman. S.(1986). *Working with words: A guide to teaching and learning vocabulary*: CUP.

Hulstijn, J. H. (1992). Retention of inferred and given word meanings: Experiments in incidental learning. In P. Arnaud, & H. Bejoint (Eds.), *Vocabulary and Applied Linguistics* (pp. 113-125). London: MacMillan.

Hulstijn, J. H., & Laufer, B. (2001). Some empirical evidence for the involvement load hypothesis in vocabulary acquisition. *Language learning, 51*(3), 539-558.

Joe, A. (1995). Text-based tasks and incidental vocabulary learning. *Second Language Research, 11*, 149-158.

Joe, A. (1998). What effects do text-based tasks promoting generation have on incidental vocabulary acquisition? *Applied Linguistics, 19*, 357-377.

Laufer, B., & Hill, M. (2000). What lexical information do L2 learners select in a CALL dictionary and how does it affect word retention. *Language Learning & Technology, 3*(2), 58-76.

Lazar, G. (1996). Using figurative language to expand students' vocabulary. *ELT journal, 50*(1), 43-51.

Lee, S. H., & Muncie, J. (2006). From receptive to productive: Improving ESL learners' use of vocabulary in a postreading composition task. *TESOL Quarterly, 40*(2), 295-320.

Levin, B. (1993). *English verb classes and alternations: A preliminary investigation*: University of Chicago press.

Linton, M. (1975). Memory for real-world events. *Explorations in cognition*, 376-404.

Mastropieri, M. A., & Scruggs, T. E. (1991). *Teaching students ways to remember: Strategies for learning mnemonically*: Brookline Books.

Mieder, W. (2004). *Proverbs: A handbook*: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Mieder, W. (1985). Popular views of the proverb. *Proverbium*, *2*, 109-143.

Mieder, W., & Holmes, D. (2000). *" Children and proverbs speak the truth": teaching proverbial wisdom to fourth graders* (Vol. 7): University of Vermont.

Nassaji, H. (2003). L2 vocabulary learning from context: Strategies, knowledge sources, and their relationship with success in L2 lexical inferencing. *TESOL Quarterly, 37*(4), 645-670.

Newton, J. (1995). Task-based interaction and incidental vocabulary learning: A case study. *Second Language Research, 11*, 159-177.

Norrick, N. R. (1985). *How proverbs mean: Semantic studies in English proverbs* (Vol. 27): Walter de Gruyter.

Nuessel, F., & Cicogna, C. (2003). Proverbs and metaphoric language in second-language acquisition. *Cognition, comprehension and communication. A decade of North American proverb studies*, 395-412.

O'keeffe, A., McCarthy, M., & Carter, R. (2007). *From corpus to classroom: Language use and language teaching*: Cambridge University Press.

Paivio, A., & Psychology, U. o. W. O. D. o. (1971). *A theoretical analysis of the role of imagery in learning and memory*: London [Ont]: Department of Psychology, University of Western Ontario.

Plass, J. L., Chun, D. M., Mayer, R. E., & Leutner, D. (1998). Supporting visual and verbal learning preferences in a second-language multimedia learning environment. *Journal of educational psychology, 90*(1), 25.

Porto, M. (1998). Lexical phrases and language teaching. *Forum* 36(3). Retrieved from http://exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol36/no3/p22.htm

Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in teaching writing*: Oxford.Oxford University Press.

Read, J. (2004). Research in teaching vocabulary. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *24*, 146-161.

Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of   current practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Rowland, D. (1926). The use of proverbs in beginners 'classes in the modern languages. *The modern language journal, 11*(2), 89-91.

Solso, R. L. Cognitive psychology. 1995: Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Sudiran, M.Hum (2007). The role of english proverbs in the development of writing skill, Celt,(7). 129-141

Thompson, I. (1987). Memory in language learning. *Learner strategies in language learning*, 43-56.

Vanyushkina-Holt, N. (2005). Proverbial language and its role in acquiring a second language and culture. *The Case of Russian. Diss. Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.*

Vasiljević, Z. (2013). Effects of Learner-Generated Illustrations on Comprehension and Recall of L2 Idioms. *ELTA Journals,*1 (1), 24-46.

Wesche, M. B., & Paribakht, T. S. (2000). Reading-Based Exercises in Second Language Vocabulary Learning: An Introspective Study. *The modern language journal, 84*(2), 196-213.

Wright, A. (1989). *Pictures for language learning*: Cambridge University Press.

Yorio, C. A. (1980). Conventionalized language forms and the development of communicative competence. *TESOL Quarterly*, 433-442.