The Effect of Story-based, L₁ Translation, and Whatsapp Emoticon Puzzle-Solving Techniques on Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' Proverb Learning

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of story-based technique, L₁ translation, and Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving on EFL learners' learning proverbs. From among 90 female intermediate level learners at two language institutes in Qom, Iran, 60 homogeneous students were chosen following the administration of a sample of Nelson proficiency test and a pre-test. The 60 participants were then assigned to three experimental groups, equal in number. The experimental group 1 was instructed using story-based technique; the experimental group 2 was taught through L₁ translation; and the experimental group 3 was exposed to Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving. Subsequently, all three groups took part in a proverb post-test similar to the pre-test. The data were analyzed by ANOVA. The results showed that Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving was significantly the most effective, and that the students' level of learning proverbs was influenced by story-based technique more than L₁ translation technique. The findings of this study can contribute to technology- enhanced language teaching.

Keywords: proverb, story-based technique, translation, Whatsapp emoticons

Introduction

Proverbs, as a part of idiomatic expressions, the mastery of which form the most significant part of language learning, have been used as a pedagogical tool in modern societies to teach moral values and social skills (Mieder, 2004). According to Rusieshvili and Gozpinar (2014), proverbs have the positive effects of cultural learning. Lots of studies have focused on different techniques which are more or less effectual for L_2 learning proverbs.

A story-based technique, as an essential communication tool, engages learners with the content and experiential learning, safely moves participants from their comfort zones to encounter something totally new and delivers overall meaning to learners (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Gargiulo, 2007). Translation technique via identifying the proverbs in the target language and then finding the best equivalence meaning in the first language is one of the most important tools for teaching and learning language (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987; Cook, 2001).

Technological tools such as social networks (SNs), World Wide Web (WWW), and mobile assisted language learning (MALL) also play a significant role in language learning and they are more effective, efficient or enjoyable (Goodyear & Retalis, 2010; Kenning, 2007; Khany, 2013; Korkmaz, 2010). Malone (1981) stated that "if students are motivated to learn something, they may spend more time and effort learning and use it more in the future" (p. 335). A famous social network, Whatsapp Messenger, which can send messages through texts, images, videos, audio, emoticons and emojis, "has Cost efficiency, effective, quick and easier mode of communication, confidential, and convenient usage; allows learners to communicate with peers and teachers" (Tawiah, Nondzor, & Alhaji, 2014, p.105). Teachers could use these techniques to arouse student's motivations and interests into learning.

Honeck (1997) expressed that "A proverb can be regarded as a discourse deviant, relatively concrete, present tense statement that uses characteristic linguistic markers to arouse cognitive ideals that serve to categorize topics in order to make a pragmatic point about them" (p.4). Proverbs are "statements that capture the shared values, beliefs, and wisdom of a society" (Nippold, Uhden, & Schwarz, 1997, as cited in Santos, 2000, p.2). A proverb is defined as "a pithy and popular expression that presents an idea of experience, knowledge, advice, morality, truth, virtue, genius, irony, etc" (Gorjian, 2006, p.1).

Norrick (1985) distinguished five types of figurative proverbs: "synecdochic, metaphoric, metonymic, hyperbolic, and paradoxical" (p.45). Cook (1993, as cited in Yellin, 2012, p.100) assembled proverbs into categories such as "peace of mind, happiness, acceptance, forgiveness, helping other people, a higher power or God, faith and belief, self-acceptance, self-knowledge, self-reliance, simplicity, the past, the present, hope, etc. ".

Mieder (2006) noted that a proverb is a traditional saying that "sums up a situation, passes judgment on a past matter, or recommends a course of action for the future" (p.11). Proverbs are rich wisdom sayings in all cultures that pass on values. Nowadays, the transfer of these cultural elements according to Guven and Halat (2015) is the most important subject that is included in teaching foreign language programs. In other words, as proverbs are part of any culture, learning any target language cannot be considered apart from its culture. Up to now many scholars and researchers in different languages have studied the role of proverbs in teaching different subjects in which it could be a useful tool. Proverbs play an important role in language teaching. For now they are effective to learn more about the gained knowledge of different cultures and they need a specific level of language understanding for the learners to be able to understand and use them (Akpınar, 2010; Alavinia, 2016; Guven & Halat, 2015).

Schmidt (2010) believed that one must attend to both the linguistic form of utterances and the relevant social and contextual features with which they are associated. Dunnett, Dubin, and Lezberg (1986, as cited in Guven & Halat, 2015) have noted that the syllabus should be placed on transferring cultural elements, just like on teaching grammar and vocabulary; foreign language classes should be designed in the manner that provides the time that enables the transferring of cultural elements. Mieder (2004) claimed that the use of proverbs in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language is important for the learners' ability to communicate effectively "from friendly chats, powerful political speeches, and religious sermons to lyrical poetry" (p.1).

Ashipu (2013) claimed that one of the major aims of using proverbs in a speech is to "create an impact in the thinking of the listener toward the speaker's desired goal" (p.11). Mieder (2006) believed that proverbs have always played a major role in human communication. Alavinia (2016) stated

that instructors can use proverbs to engage students in learning, improve their understanding of other cultures and languages, and promote a "globally-sensitive community" (p.10).

Among techniques for learning proverbs are story-based technique, L_1 translation, and Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving. Ellis and Brewster (2014) defined storytelling "as a way to create an acquisition-rich environment and ideal learning conditions" (p.6). It is "the act of using language and gesture in colorful ways to create scenes in a sequence" (Gere, 2002, as cited in Soleimani & Akbari, 2013, p.405). Inala and Cakirb (2014) claimed that a story based technique "can kill many birds with one stone". In other words, "stories can provide students with fun and enjoyment" that motivate them positively towards the lesson and help them learn new information in an unforgettable way (p.679). On the role of storytelling in the foreign language classroom, Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2011) recommended storybook reading as a respected activity in educational setting. A story-based technique is an effective tool to engage learners with the content and is a natural part of communication. Wright (2004, as cited in Rokhayani, 2010, p.32) pointed out that "stories provide meaningful contexts and natural repetition". In the same way, Pedersen (1995), Colon-villa (1997), Ellis and Brewster (2014), Martínez, (2007), Rokhayani (2010), Wright (2004), and Yazdanpanah (2012) believed that storytelling develops communication skills and is used in education to convey knowledge of all genera, to arouse interest and increase motivation among students, to fill the gap between language study and language use, and to develop students' motivation and interests.

Researchers like Anyushkina-Holt (2005), Baharian (2014), and Sadeghi, Vahid, Dastjerdi, and Ketabi (2010) have mentioned that the contextualization can be much effective in the comprehension of idiomatic expressions such as idioms and proverbs. Norouzzadeh Chegini (2014) found that many proverbs emerge in stories, whether they are real or not. Accordimg to Ebong (2004), through story-based technique, learners could be able to understand the meaning of thought proverbs and recall in the right occasion.

Neubert and Shreve (1992, as cited in Othman, 2013, p.19) pointed out that "translation is forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target reader". Nida and Taber (1969) believed that the meaning of a text cannot be conveyed unless

the message of the ST is provided in the TT. It is through translation as a means of communication that learners can communicate, exchange knowledge, and benefit from research written in foreign languages. Learning proverbs may show a significant misunderstanding and mistranslation by reason of translating or finding equivalent one to them of the source language.

Not all proverbs have direct equivalents in another language, because some proverbs are culture specific and cannot be understood in another culture as Dabaghi, Pishbin, and Niknasab (2010) believed that "it is not reasonable to translate a proverb while just looking at the first meaning of its words in a dictionary" (p.813). Gorjian (2006) maintained that, "proverbs are structurally, pragmatically, conceptually, culturally and contextually sensitive" (p.7). The nature of proverb as a category of formulaic language makes resistant to literal translation as Khodabakhsh, Sadeghi, and Bakhshi (2013) have mentioned that "the target language may not use lexical formulas that are directly equivalent to those used by the source language to express the same meanings or at least not with the same frequency" (p.245).

The inclusion of technology and educational multimedia in language learning and teaching has increased considerably. Gasmi (2014) mentioned that technology has transformed the field of higher education and more specifically the field of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching. In this regard, Tawiah and Nondzor (2015) believe that social media is now everywhere and learners have come to appreciate the attitude of using multimedia to enhance them differently and expressively.

In language teaching, internet in general and web-based exercises, in particular, are an excellent way of reviewing vocabulary as students receive immediate feedback for their responses, and can review the material at any time from any computer with Internet access. Khany (2013) claimed that social networking (SNs) is an outstanding tool for fostering new social relations between the learners, resulting in improving their proficiency. He stated that "when online social networking of students combines with their education, their education can get innovative and entertaining" (p.197).

Whatsapp is a new and very popular, convenient, effective and reliable mobile application, which enables learners to communicate using instant messaging from different modes and elements that can incorporate in the

chunks of digital. Rambe and Chipunza (2013) have claimed that "students conceived Whatsapp as a lever for bridging access to peer-generated resources, heightening on task behavior and promoting meaningful context-free learning" (p.331). In this case, Aburezeq and Ishtaiwa (2013) pointed out the important feature of the Whatsapp as "the offline messaging" in which all messages are conveyed when the device is off (p.166).

The use of Whatsapp for language learning has five features: text, photo, video, audio and emoji. A small emoticon as a symbol of picture, is equivalent to some words. It can make message very clear to the receiver which even many words may not be able to do verbally. Nowadays, smart phone users are posting very interesting puzzles combination of Whatsapp emoticons and share them with their friends on Facebook or other social networking websites. The users can create many puzzles through emoticons like guessing movie, song, actors, cars, animals' names, etc. Students can create interesting emoticon puzzle through Whatsapp application in their smart phones from sending text messages as an imaginative illocutionary of pragmatic competence to meaningful negotiation of interaction in real life.

Teachers as facilitators could create a social networking group via Whatsapp and engage students to learn English through emoticon puzzle solving. Puzzles can be used to support a variety of different types of learning depending on the type of puzzle. The more complexity and challenging the puzzle is, the more learning will occur. According to Sargin, Baltaci, Bicici, and Yumusak (2015), "puzzles promote recall, recognition, location and linking, … with the help of interesting, motivating, nice problems, they analyze the main principles and problem types" (p. 2857).

Up to now, proverbs have been considered from different viewpoints due to their important role in language teaching. Although previous researchers (e.g. Beekman & Callow, 1974; Can, 2011; Gorjian, 2006; Othman, 2013) studied various strategies and techniques for teaching proverbs, and tried to centralize them in course books, curriculums, and the assessments, there has not been adequate research concerning the use of technology enhanced teaching of proverbs in general and Whatsapp emoticons, storytelling and translation, in particular, to engage learners on learning proverbs. Therefore, the main motive behinde in this study was to investigate the impact of story-based technique, L_1 translation, and Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving on EFL learners' learning

of proverbs.To achieve the purpose of the study, the following research question and null hypothesis were formulated:

(RQ): Are there any statistically significant differences among the effect of story-based technique, L_1 translation, and Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' proverb learning?

(H_0): There are not any statistically significant differences among the effect of story-based technique, L_1 translation, and Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' proverb learning.

Method

Participants

The sample of this study included 90 female EFL learners, aged within the range of 15 to 20, who were selected based on intact-group design and from two language institutes in Qom, Iran. All of the participants had Whatsapp application on their mobile phones. At the first stage, a Nelson proficiency test 200A (Flower & Coe, 1976) was administered to them. The 66 out of 90 EFL learners whose scores fell within the range (26 to 40) of one standard deviation (7.25) above and below the mean participated (33.23) in the second stage. In the second stage, in order to have a homogeneous sample in terms of proverb knowledge, they took a teacher-made proverb recognition pre-test. From the total of 66 learners, six learners, who answered at least one question correctly were excluded. Then, the 60 participants were randomly assigned to the following three experimental groups, equal in number: Group 1 (G_1) receiving instruction on learning proverbs through story-based technique; Group 2 (G_2) through L_1 translation technique; and Group 3 (G_3) through Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving technique.

Instrumentation

The tests used in this study consisted of a proficiency test and two proverb tests, the pre-test and the post-test. The materials used in this study consisted of a story book including 41 English proverbs, the English to Persian dictionary of proverbs, and Whatsapp application mobile.

To check the homogeneity of the participants in terms of their language proficiency, Nelson proficiency test (Flower & Coe, 1976) was conducted at the beginning of the research. The time allocated was 50 minutes. It consists of three sections: cloze tests, structure, and vocabulary in the form of multiple choice questions with a total number of 50 items. It is considered as a highly valid and reliable test of English proficiency (Shahivand & Pazhakh, 2012). According to Motallebzadeh, Beh-Afarin, and Daliry Rad (2011), the reliability of the test, estimated by Cronbach's Alpha, is 0.816.

A pre-test for measuring the participants' proverbial knowledge was designed based on a story book, consisting of 41 proverbs. The pre-test included 25 multiple-choice questions on proverbial knowledge which was going to be taught. It should be noted that it was a recognition test. The participants were asked to choose the best answer to complete the proverbs in the form of fill-in-the-blanks (each item included a situation consisting of a proverb at the end) and also they were asked not to tick the right item in the test by chance. Three university professors confirmed the content validity of the test. The experts were responsive and provided the researcher with valuable suggestions and recommendations. Accordingly, some modifications were made to the test. The test was piloted to ten language learners and showed high reliability (0.86). The time limit of the test was 50 minutes. The post-test, used in this study was the same as the pre-test. It should be pointed out that the order of the questions and choices was changed to decrease test practice effect.

To expose the first experimental group to story-based technique, the researcher selected 40 proverbs from the story book *Interesting Stories to Learn Proverbs* (Murthi, 2004). For the second experimental group, which was instructed through L_1 translation technique, the researcher translated 40 English proverbs from the following sources: *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Proverbs* (2003), *The Facts on File Dictionary of Proverbs* (Manser, 2007). *A Compiled Range of English Idioms and Proverbs* (Shakarami, 2013), *A Concise Dictionary of English Idioms* (Minaeian, 2000), Farhang Moaser Millennium (Haghshenas, Samei, & Entekhabi, 2008), *Farhang Estelahat* (Ghafari, 2002), *101 American English Proverbs* (Collis, 1992), To expose

the third experimental group to Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving technique, the researcher created 40 puzzle proverbs through emoticons of Whatsapp application mobile.

Procedure

The pre-test was administered to measure the EFL learners' knowledge of proverbial expressions. Those participants who answered the questions correctly were assumed to know the majority of the target proverbs and were thus excluded from the study. Then, the remaining participants were randomly assigned to three experimental groups with 20 in each. The students in the first experimental group were exposed to proverbs through story-based technique. In the second experimental group, the students were exposed to proverbs through L_1 translation technique. The third experimental group were exposed to proverbs through Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving. All classes lasted about one month, three times a week, for totally 10 sessions. The participants were instructed on 40 proverbs through three different techniques.

The first experimental group (G1) was the story-based group. In order to instruct the students, 40 English stories including the proverbial expressions were used to teach the English proverbs. Each session lasted for 45 minutes during which five proverbs were presented to the students who were supposed to tell stories consisting of the same proverbs. They had time to prepare five stories in advance as homework and review the learned proverbs in the next session.

The second experimental group (G2) was the translation-based group. Since both English and Persian are expressive and rich languages in proverbs, the researcher in this study tried to find the best translation equivalent. To this end, the researcher used Persian translation and English definition of the 40 English proverbs. Each session lasted for 45 minutes during which the participants were presented with five proverbs and the teacher used L_1 translation accompanied by a brief explanation in L_1. The description was followed by a simple example extracted directly from the dictionaries mentioned in the materials section of the present thesis in order to be sure about the appropriateness of their use. Then, the researcher gave

Persian translation equivalents and focused on the literal meaning of the English proverbs in Persian for non-equivalents or near equivalents.

The third experimental group was the Whatsapp group. The Whatsapp application mobile was applied to teach emoticon puzzle to the 40 proverbs. All the learners were online at a specific time (11 p.m.) out of the classroom setting. The researcher created puzzle proverbs via emoticons of Whatsapp application mobile, saved the puzzle images and shared them on Whatsapp. Each session included an image of five puzzle proverbs in the number from 1 to 5 and along with five texts consisting of the English proverbs used in an image.

For instruction to the third experimental group, the teacher shared an image and five proverbs in a group of learners and the participants were asked to match the proverbs with the correct number of their puzzles in an image. The learners shared their comments and then, the teacher shared the answer key, descriptions, and examples of proverbs based on oxford proverbs dictionary. The descriptions and examples were chosen as short as possible, so that the students could read these messages on their small screens without having to scroll down many times. In the following sessions, in order to review the proverbs, the teacher shared some images of puzzles and the learners were asked to type the right proverbs in the group. Totally, 40 proverbs and eight images were sent as an instruction during eight sessions. At the end of the study, in the tenth session a post-test was administered which was similar to the pre-test, except in order of the questions and choices.

Design

The present study was a quasi-experimental research. The independent variable was the type of techniques, that is, story-based technique, L_1 translation, and Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving. The dependent variable was the participants' performance on proverb learning. The language proficiency of the participants was the control variable which was checked through Nelson proficiency test. All groups took the same pre-test and post-test to check if any differences existed among the three experimental groups based on their performance on proverbial knowledge. The particular design

of this study was pre-test post-test design in which the participants were given a pre-test prior to the treatment and a post-test to compare the effect of the treatments.

Results

Since none of the participants could answer any of the questions in the pre-test, no statistical test was used for the analysis of the pre-test data. After the instruction through the three techniques, the participants took a post-test similar to the pre-test, except in terms of the order of the questions. Table 1 shows the results of the post-test:

Table 1
post-test Scores of the Participants in the Three Groups

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Posttest in G1	20	13	25	18.05	3.154
Posttest in G2	20	9	22	14.60	3.604
Posttest in G3	20	17	25	21.25	2.511
Valid N (list wise)	20				

A pre-required assumption for running the parametric test of *one-way ANOVA* is the normal distribution of the data across groups. In order to make sure about the normal distribution of the post-test scores in all groups, the researcher ran a One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test on three sets of scores. Table 2 presents the results of this test.

Table 2
One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for post-test Scores in the Three Groups

		Posttest in G1	Posttest in G2	Posttest in G3
N		20	20	20
Normal Parametersa,b	Mean	18.05	14.60	21.25
	Std. Deviation	3.154	3.604	2.511
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.156	.149	.107
	Positive	.156	.149	.102
	Negative	-.070	-.084	-.107
Test Statistic		.156	.149	.107
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200c,d	.200c,d	.200c,d

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

As it is indicated in Table 2, the P-value for each set of scores is higher than 0.05, therefore, all sets of scores are normally distributed and the parametric test of *one-way ANOVA* can be used.

The second assumption is independence of observations, which means that there should not be a relationship between the observations in each group or between the groups themselves. It means that there must be different participants in each group with no participant being in more than one group. This assumption was also met based on the design of the study and assignment of the participants to three different groups. The third assumption is the equality of the variances across groups which was inspected by Levene's test. Table 3 displays the results of Levene's test of equality of error variances.

Table 3

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

Levene Statistic	Df_1	Df_2	Sig.
.657	2	57	.522

Table 3 confirms that the assumption of homogeneity of variances for the one-way ANOVA had met (p = 0.52). Having been ensured that the required assumptions were met, the researcher ran a one-way ANOVA, the results of which are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

The ANOVA of post-test Scores of the Participants in the Three Groups

	Sumof Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	442.433	2	221.217	22.699	.000
Within Groups	555.500	57	9.746		
Total	997.933	59			

As illustrated in Table 4, there was a significant difference among the three groups and it was required to conduct a Post Hoc test to determine the differences more exactly. The Tukey Post Hoc test was run on the data to serve the purpose, the results of which are presented in Table 5

Table 5
The Tukey Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons of post-test Scores

(I) Major	(J) Major	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
G1	G2	3.450*	.987	.001	1.47	5.43
	G3	-3.200*	.987	.002	-5.18	-1.22
G2	G1	-3.450*	.987	.001	-5.43	-1.47
	G3	-6.650*	.987	.000	-8.63	-4.67
G3	G1	3.200*	.987	.002	1.22	5.18
	G2	6.650*	.987	.000	4.67	8.63

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 5 displays that the G_1 (story-based) participants' post-test scores differed significantly from both G_2 (L_1 translation), (p=0.001 <0.05) and G_3 (Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving) (p=0.002<0.05) participants' post-test scores. In addition, it is clear that the post-test scores of the participants in G_2 (L_1 translation), and G_3 (Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving) were also significantly different (p=0.000<0.05). The comparison of the mean differences indicates that the participants in G_3 (Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving) outperformed both the participants in G_1 (story-based) (I-J= 3.20) and G_2 (L_1 translation) (I-J=6.65). Furthermore, the participants in G_1 (story-based) had a better performance than their counterparts in G_2 (L_1 translation) (I-J=3.45). Therefore, the null hypothesis of the study was rejected.

Discussion

The results of this study showed that the students who received Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving technique had more progress in their level of learning proverbs than the students in the other groups and that the students who received story-based technique had more improvement in their level of learning proverbs than the students in the group who received L_1 translation technique.

The use of mobile applications as effective learning tools to expand learners' attitude towards language learning have supported the findings of the present study. In this regard, the results of this study were in line with Basal, Yilmaz, Tanriverdi, and Sari's (2016) research on the effect of the mobile application in teaching idioms.

In the same line, Zhang, Song, and Burston (2011) found that the group who studied vocabulary via mobile phone SMS text messages retrieved more vocabulary in the post-tests than the group who learned through paper material. Motallebzadeh and Ganjali (2011) proved the effects of SMS on learners' performance on vocabulary retention and reading comprehension. Motallebzadeh, Beh-Afarin, and Daliry Rad (2011) also in their study, attempted to investigate the effect of SMS on the retention of collocations. Likewise, Yang (2013) reviewed on mobile assisted language learning to focus on more detailed applications of newly emerging mobile technology on vocabulary learning. Similarly, Khodashenas and Amouzegar (2013) also investigated the effect of using MALL on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning. Besides, the results of the study done by Sorayyaei and Nasiri (2014) indicated that mobile learning is an interesting and innovative way for learning a new language and improving listening comprehension. The conclusion of their study was that the experimental group receiving instruction through cell-phone based audio books outperformed the control group on their listening comprehension.

Moreover, based on the findings of the research done by Rambe and Chipunza (2013), students learned technical skills by sharing and searching information on Whatsapp rather than other study-related platforms like the blackboard environment. Alsaleem (2014) found that Whatsapp electronic journaling improved the vocabulary word choice and voice writing skills of undergraduate students. It was concluded that the use of Whatsapp application of mobile phone could be an efficient technique as compared to other techniques to improve knowledge of EFL learners. Furthermore, although the findings of these studies were in the same line with the findings of the present study, there is dissimilarity due to focusing on the other skills (reading, listening, or writing) and components (vocabulary, collocation, or idiom) in only one or two experimental groups.

The findings of this study have certain implications for both English language teachers and learners. It can be beneficial for teachers who are searching for effective ways of improving their learners` proverb learning. They can use different techniques including story-based technique, L_1 translation, and Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving in general, and more

specifically, Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving, in order to increase their students `proverb learning. Moreover, they can use mobile actively in language teaching to have more interactive and interesting instruction. The researchers advise teachers in mobile-assissted teaching and learning to use Whatsapp mobile application to create activities through integrating both face-to-face learning and mobile learning to help EFL learners to learn proverbs more effectively. Language learners can provide mobile applications in educational settings, so that they can learn language beyond the classroom. Whatsapp technology can also enhance students' active participation in the EFL classroom. What is most specifically beneficial in helping students reach higher level of proverb learning is the use of Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving technique. Furthermore, it can provide students with an opportunity for practicing the language for free and more personal and comprehensive relationship between students and teachers.

Both teachers and students feel the need to pay more attention to the proverbs incorporated in the course books.The findings have also implications for syllabus designers and material developers to fill the gap between the operational source of English language teaching proverbs and English teacher education. In addition, it is useful for curriculum designers to consider different techniques specially Whatsapp as the effective factors for developing learners` proverb learning. They use the results of this study by designing and developing attractive books for learners so that teachers can select or adapt them to facilitate proverb teaching and learning.

Similar to other studies, the present study also suffered from some unavoidable limitation. Firstly this study is not generalizable to all language learning contexts since, it was conducted in Mehr and Tannin institutes in Qom, Iran. Secondly, the major problem with this research was the treatment period which was only 360 minutes. In order to get more valid results, the students need to be trained in a longer period of time. This study investigated the most effective type of techniques to promote EFL learner's proverb learning, additional research could be done on the following issues. It was based on the effect of story-based technique, L_1 translation, and Whatsapp emoticon puzzle solving on proverb learning by Iranian intermediate EFL learners; so, it is possible for other researchers to carry out their studies on learning other formulaic chunks (idioms, collocations, sentence stems, etc.). Moreover, the current study was carried out with the participation of intermediate level students at different institutes. It would be stimulating to compare its results with the results of studies done on other levels of proficiency, which would enable researchers to generalize the result of this research to a wider population.

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