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Research Paper

## L2 Idioms: On the Effectiveness of Teaching Techniques

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### Abstract

This study was conducted to compare the possible effect of four ways of teaching on EFL learners' comprehension and production of English idioms. A sample of 80 female Iranian EFL learners (in four groups) at *Guya institute* in Qazvin were selected. Each group of participants received instruction through one of the four techniques of visualization, storytelling, game and lexical awareness techniques. The participants were given a 60-item Oxford Placement Test to make sure that their general proficiency level was approximately the same. They were also given an idioms pretest. After the treatment period, posttests of idiom comprehension and production were given to all the four groups. One-way ANOVA was run to analyze the collected data. The results suggested that the differences among the four techniques in terms of their effectiveness on L2 idiom comprehension were not statistically significant. However, the four techniques were differentially effective on idiom production. To see which of the four techniques was more effective than the others, a post-hoc Sheffe test was conducted, showing that visualization was significantly more effective than game and lexical awareness on L2 idiom production. The results also showed that storytelling was more effective than game and lexical awareness techniques. These findings can have worthwhile implications for second language teachers, learners and coursebook designers.

**Keywords:** Idioms Comprehension, Idiom Production, Game, Lexical Awareness, Storytelling, Visualization

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## **1. Introduction**

Language learning process is very complicated and multi-dimensional. Among the many dimensions, vocabulary knowledge is of crucial importance and has attracted substantial attention. As Zarei and Sahami Gilani (2013), maintain vocabulary learning is the main component of language and knowledge acquisition. At the same time, vocabulary is not confined to words; a language is also replete with routine language items, particularly idioms, which are metaphorical expressions (Rodriguez & Winnberg, 2013). One of the components of figurative language is idioms. Idioms are one of the most frequently utilized figures of speech in everyday life in every language. Liontas (2017) highlights the need to teach idioms to language learners, even those at relatively high proficiency levels. Lundblom and Woods (2012) further highlight the role of idioms in language classes and point out that idioms are highly applicable in language classrooms; therefore, lack of knowledge concerning the meaning of idioms can impede the process of language learning. In fact, learning idioms is no less important than learning the communicative aspects for students who want to learn another language (Khoshniyat & Dowlatabadi, 2014). As idioms are quite essential in learning a second language, it is essential that language teachers design different activities for learners so that they can learn English idioms more efficiently (Zarei & Rahimi, 2014). The main objective of this study was to check the comparative effectiveness of four of the commonly used teaching techniques on the receptive as well as productive learning of L2 idioms by intermediate level learners in the EFL context of Iran.

## **2. Literature Review**

Because idioms are very contextual and have different meanings from their constituent components, Liontas (2002) points out that many second language learners, even those with a high proficiency, are unable to use them appropriately, or they avoid using them altogether. Abel (2003) also views idioms as expressions that are almost fixed in such a way that the figurative meaning of the whole idiom is usually not always obvious on the basis of the meaning of the lexical components. Similarly, Cutting and Block (1997) consider an idiom as "a unitized phrase with interpretations that are independent of the literal meanings of their individual words" (p. 57). Guo (2019) holds that because the general meaning that an idiom has may not always be understandable from the literal meaning of the lexical constituents of that idiom, it is essential that students' attention be drawn to idioms and how important they are in language production.

### **2.1 Types of Idiom**

Idioms have been classified differently by different researchers. Cooper (1999) believes that idioms can be divided into two categories, namely decomposable and non-decomposable. Decomposable idioms are those that can be broken down, for instance, *pop the questions*. In this idiom, figurative and literal meanings have a connection to each other, and each part has its own meaning. But, in non-decomposable idioms, you cannot separate the constituent lexical items from each other. In fact, the meaning of each of the constituents in non-decomposable idioms does not refer to the figurative meaning (Cooper, 1999). Another categorization of idioms has been done by Makkai (1972). Makkai has distinguished between two general classes of idioms; namely encoding and decoding idioms. Idioms of encoding, which are also known as identifiable idioms, are actually idiomatic combinations of words that normally bear clear meaning at the same time that they involve

some sort of collocational restrictions. Idioms of decoding, which are also known as non-identifiable idioms, are those expressions the explanation of which may not be easily understood by simply using the formal regularities of language.

## **2.2 Presentation Techniques**

Due to the importance of idioms in successful language learning, finding more effective ways of teaching idioms has been a long-standing concern of many teaching practitioners as well as researchers. As a result of the efforts made by the above-mentioned stakeholders, several techniques have been suggested to improve the learning of L2 idioms. From among the multitude of potentially effective techniques, this study is focused on visualization, games, storytelling and lexical awareness.

Previous research seems to have addressed the use of visualization in language learning. However, it seems that the role of visualization techniques in idiom learning has received little attention. Some researchers (e.g., Hegarty, 2004) believe that the pictorial introduction of vocabulary can assist learners to learn them more successfully because pictures allow learners to create certain mental images that make words more memorable.

There are also some studies on how games affect learning L2 vocabulary, in general and idioms, in particular. For instance, Derakhshan and Davoodi Khatir (2015) sought to find out the role of games in learning L2 vocabulary and concluded that game-based teaching is an effective way of improving learners' vocabulary learning. Similar results were reported by Ameer Bakhsh (2016) and Taheri (2014), especially for vocabulary retention. Argit et al. (2020) also reported that games can prove quite effective for vocabulary learning, especially with young language learners. On the other hand, Rohani and Pourgharib (2013) found no meaningful difference between game-based teaching and conventional teaching as far as learning vocabulary was

concerned. With regard to how games might affect idiom learning, Thiruvengadam (2016) explored the role of games in L2 idioms teaching and found that games, especially online games, could be an effective tool in improving the process of idiom learning. In another study, Al-Ramahi and Smadi (2015) reported that video games could positively influence the learning of idioms.

Storytelling is another technique that can be used in language learning. It can be used to acquire a foreign language and learn idiomatic expressions. According to Li and Hew (2017), stories are very effective because they penetrate the learners' sense of self, while increasing the acquaintance of the world around them. They believe that storytelling has multiple benefits for students, and that it facilitates idioms learning. Meri-Yilan (2020) also found evidence that storytelling in a digital task-based classroom could significantly improve learners' speaking abilities.

Another possible way of facilitating the learning of second language idioms is drawing learners' attention to the lexical constituents of the target idioms. Zarei and Ramezankhani (2018) believe that lexical knowledge includes not only having knowledge about what a word literally means, but also knowing its connotations in different contexts as well as its syntactic and morphological properties. Studies in the domain of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) have shown that the positive role that lexical knowledge can have in improving students' proficiency level in the process of learning a language is undeniable. For example, Jahangard, et al. (2010) showed that lexical knowledge that was learnt even through decontextualized practice could be transferred to reading comprehension tasks and, thereby, improve learners' general comprehension ability. What is less certain is whether, and to what extent, lexical awareness can influence the learning of idioms. The researcher in this study set out to compare the above-mentioned techniques

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with each other to see which one is the most effective on the comprehension and production of L2 idiom. To achieve the mentioned objective, the following questions were addressed:

1. Are there any significant differences among the presentation techniques of visualization, games, lexical awareness, and storytelling in terms of their effectiveness on idiom comprehension?
2. Are there any significant differences among the presentation techniques of visualization, games, lexical awareness, and storytelling in terms of their effectiveness on idiom production?

## 3. Method

### 3.1 Participants

A sample of 80 female intermediate level language learners was selected through the nonrandom method of convenience sampling on the basis of their availability to participate in the experiment. The participants were learning conversational English at *Guya Language Institute in Qazvin, Iran*. Their age ranged from 18 to 23. The initial number of the participants was 120, and they were in four intact classes. After homogenizing the participants by using Oxford Placement Test (OPT), and excluding outliers from statistical analysis, there remained 80 participants in 4 groups of 20 members each. Each group of participants was randomly given instruction through one of the techniques of visualization, lexical awareness, game and storytelling.

### 3.2 Instrumentation

The instruments and instructional materials that were used were as follows:

#### 3.2.1 Oxford Placement Test

This test was utilized to homogenize the participants. OPT is a famous standard test for determining the language proficiency level of EFL learners. The sample of the OPT that was used in this study had three parts testing the participants' knowledge of grammar as well vocabulary and reading

comprehension. The items were either in multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank format. The maximum possible score was 60. The test is an already validated instrument widely accepted and used in different studies. Therefore, its validity and reliability could be taken for granted. Nevertheless, because reliability is context sensitive, to re-estimate its reliability in the new context, the researcher applied the KR-21 formula, which yielded a reliability index of 0.87.

### **3.2.2 Pretest of English idioms**

A researcher made pretest consisting of 150 idioms was developed and given to all groups; the participants were required to supply the meaning of the target idioms. The idioms that turned out to be familiar to more than five participants were excluded from the posttests.

### **3.2.3 Posttest of idioms comprehension**

The target idioms were selected from a list of 150 idioms that were taught during the treatment. A researcher made idioms comprehension test consisting of 30 items was constructed in multiple choice format. In this test, some items included an underlined idiom, and four possible meanings were offered for the participants to choose from. Other items included blanks which could be filled with one of the given idioms. The reliability index of the test was estimated, through KR-21, to be .84.

### **3.2.4 Posttest of idioms production**

Another 30-item posttest of idioms in fill-in-the-blank format was utilized to gauge the participants' knowledge of idioms production. In each item, there was a blank to be filled with an idiom. The initial word of each idiom was provided along with its Persian equivalent. The purpose of this was to make sure that the participants produced only the intended idioms and not synonyms or any other elements that could make sense in the context.

### 3.2.5 Materials

The instructional materials included 150 idioms, extracted from 150 animation clips downloaded from YouTube. For each group, 10 idioms were taught every session, these idioms were presented to the participants in four different ways, each group receiving their treatment through one of the aforementioned techniques. The other material was games. In this study, emoji and word puzzle were used. For the visualization group, 150 animation clips were used during the treatment. And for the storytelling group, the teacher brought the picture of the idioms, showed it to the learners and asked them to tell a story based on the picture.

### 3.3 Procedure

To conduct this experiment, the following steps were taken. First of all, a sample of 120 female intermediate level language learners was selected through convenience sampling. They had enrolled for a conversational English course at *Guya Institute in Qazvin*. To homogenize them, the OPT was administered. Eighty students out of 120, who scored between 37 and 47, were chosen as the participants of the study, based on the OPT directions.

After homogenizing the participants, they were randomly assigned to treatment conditions, and each group was given instruction using one of the above-described techniques. In the next step, the pretest of idioms was given to all the four groups to check the participants' familiarity with the intended idioms. After correcting the papers, the familiar idioms were removed from the post tests. Then treatment began. In the visualization group, the researcher presented an animation clip about an idiom and asked the learners to try and guess the idiom and its meaning. Next, he presented certain pictures in which the theme was related to the meaning of the idiom. Then, the students were given another chance to guess its meaning. Finally, if



learners attempt to guess the meaning failed, the correct answer was given by the teacher.

In group 2, the participants received instruction through lexical awareness raising. The researcher wrote each idiom on the whiteboard and then explicitly taught the participants each of the individual words in each idiom and then combined those words to make the idiom.

In group 3, the participants received instruction through game. The game used in this group included *Emoji Game* and *Word Puzzle*. In *Emoji game*, the teacher showed the learners a picture and asked them to guess the idiom it illustrated. They had opportunities to ask questions. In *word puzzle*, the teacher gave some information about the target idiom to the participants, and then the components of the idiom were presented to the class. The learners were expected to find the idiom like solving a puzzle.

In group 4, the participants received instruction through storytelling. The teacher introduced a series of pictures related to a story, and asked the learners to see if they could guess the story based on the pictures. They were also encouraged to guess and announce who they thought the major characters in the story were. With the use of pictures as well as body movements, gestures, facial expressions and mimes, the teacher narrated the story. The teacher retold the story together with the students. Then, the students were given the opportunity to retell the story. Then, the teacher asked the students to do exercises such as filling the blanks and putting the story into the right order. By doing these activities, the teacher emphasized the target idioms. Finally, the teacher divided the class into four groups, and each group told the story.

After four weeks of treatment (12 sessions), the researcher administered the idioms comprehension and production posttests to all the groups. The

collected data were then prepared for analysis using a one-way ANOVA for each research question.

### 3.4 Design

The independent variable was techniques of presentation with four levels including visualization, games, lexical awareness, and storytelling. The two dependent variables included idiom comprehension and idiom production. The study included a pretest to check the learners' familiarity with idioms at the onset of the treatment and two posttests to check their idiom knowledge after the treatment. In addition, every group of learners acted as a comparison group for the other groups. Therefore, the study adopted a pretest-posttest comparison group design. However, despite the fact that the assignment of the learners to the different treatment conditions was done on a random basis, their initial selection could not be done randomly. Therefore, it can be said that the design was a quasi-experimental one.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Idiom Comprehension

The first question was meant to compare the effect lexical awareness, game, story-telling and visualization on the receptive knowledge of L2 idioms. To achieve this, the researcher made use of a one-way ANOVA to compare the scores on the multiple-choice posttest. Table 1 includes the descriptive statistics.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for the ANOVA on Idiom Comprehension*

	N	Mean	Sd.	Std. Error
Visualization	2024.32	2002.98	741	.59870
Storytelling	2026.84	2002.02	154	.56920
Lexical awareness	2023.57	2002.97	458	.60741
Game	2022.69	2002.87	954	.63487

	N	Mean	Sd.	Std. Error
Visualization	2024.32	2002.98	741	.59870
Storytelling	2026.84	2002.02	154	.56920
Lexical awareness	2023.57	2002.97	458	.60741
Game	2022.69	2002.87	954	.63487
Total	8024.35	502.71	576	.34821

Table 1 shows that the highest mean on the idiom comprehension test belongs to the storytelling group ( $\bar{x}= 26.84$ ), followed by the visualization group ( $\bar{x}=24.32$ ). The third highest mean belongs to the lexical awareness group ( $\bar{x}=23.57$ ), and the game group ( $\bar{x}= 22.69$ ) has the lowest mean. In order to see whether the observed mean differences among the groups are statistically significant, the one-way ANOVA procedure was used. The results of the ANOVA procedure are summarized in Table 2.

In Table 4.2, the result ( $F_{(3,76)} = 11.47, p < .005$ ) indicates that there are statistically significant differences among the four groups. At the same time, the index of the strength of association ( $\omega^2 = 0.25$ ) indicates that 25 percent of the total variance in the dependent variable (idiom comprehension) is accounted for by the independent variable. This means that the remaining 75 percent of the variance is left unaccounted for.

Table 2

*Result of the ANOVA Procedure on Idiom Comprehension*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	229.040	3	73.453	11.47	.000
Within Groups	563.940	76	7.478		
Total	792.980	79			$\omega^2=.25$

In order to locate the differences among the groups, a post hoc Scheffe test was used. The results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

*Multiple comparisons for the ANOVA on idiom comprehension*

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(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Visualization	Story telling	-2.40	.070	-4.34	.13
	Lexical awareness	.930	.743	-1.49	3.45
	Game	2.22	.082	-.186	4.78
Story telling	Lexical awareness	3.24*	.004	.83	5.78
	Game	4.58*	.000	2.15	6.98
Lexical awareness	Game	1.310	.508	-1.1874	3.7379

The result further indicates that although there is a difference between the means of the visualization group and the storytelling group, the difference is statistically insignificant. Moreover, the result shows that there are no statistically significant differences between the visualization and the lexical awareness groups, as well as the visualization group and the game group.

#### 4.2 The Second Research Question

The aim of the second research question was to examine the effect of lexical awareness raising, game, storytelling, and visualization on L2 idiom production. To this end, another one-way ANOVA procedure was run. The descriptive statistics of the participants' performance on the idiom production test are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for the ANOVA on Idiom Production*

	N	Mean	Sd.
Visualization	20	24.434	8.89
Story telling	20	24.983	8.88

Lexical awareness	2021.544.01
Game	2020.373.26
Total	8022.834.01

To see whether or not the observed differences among the groups are statistically significant, the one-way ANOVA procedure was used. The obtained results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5  
*The Results of the ANOVA on Idiom Production*

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	324.547	3	118.146	7.294	.000
Within Groups	1121.060	76	14.874		
Total	1445.607	79			$\omega^2 = .19$

As it can be seen in Table 5, the F-value and the significance level ( $F_{(3,76)} = 7.94$ ,  $p < .005$ ) are indicative of significant differences among the means. Moreover, the index of the strength of association ( $\omega^2 = 0.19$ ) shows that 19 percent of the total variance in the dependent variable (idiom production) is accounted for by the independent variable (treatments). Another post hoc Scheffé test was utilized to locate the differences among the groups. The results of the multiple comparisons are summarized in Table 4.6.

Based on Table 4.6, the difference between the visualization group and the game group is statistically significant, with the visualization group outperforming the game group. However, there are no statistically significant differences between the visualization group and the storytelling group, as well as between the visualization group and the lexical awareness group. Moreover, the Scheffé test indicates that the mean score of the storytelling group is significantly better than the mean scores of the lexical awareness and the game groups, but the mean scores of the latter two groups do not differ significantly from each other. In other words, the participants of the storytelling group have outperformed those of the lexical awareness and the

game groups, suggesting that storytelling task is the most effective task in idiom production.

Table 6  
*Multiple Comparisons of Means for the ANOVA on Idiom Production*

(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Visualization	Story telling	-.36	.995	-3.88	3.12
	Lexical awareness	3.20	.083	-.28	6.68
	Game	4.20*	.008	.83	7.76
Story telling	Lexical awareness	3.65*	.044	.08	7.01
	Game	4.78*	.004	1.18	8.11
Lexical awareness	Game	1.20000	.845	-2.37	4.57

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

#### 4.3 Discussion

This study investigated the comparative effects of various presentation techniques on idiom comprehension and idiom production of EFL learners. Concerning the first research question, the outcomes supported the positive effects of storytelling on L2 idiom comprehension. This result is compatible with those of several studies, such as Deignan, et al. (1997), Lazar (1996), and Liu (2008), who showed that any activity that could raise learners' metaphoric awareness would have positive effects on idiom comprehension. They believe that storytelling can have positive effects on idiom comprehension through raising metaphorical awareness.

Also, Hamidzade and Mohamadi Zanozaq (2018) showed the positive effects of storytelling on language learners' L2 comprehension of idiomatic expressions. They reported that storytelling eased the process of idiom learning. This finding is in line with that of Soleimani and Akbari (2013), who assert that storytelling in EFL is a powerful and effective way to raising

the level of vocabulary acquisition. According to Soleimani and Akbari, storytelling can also develop students' motivation and interest.

All the above studies confirm the significant effect of storytelling on idiom comprehension. One of the reasons why the participants of this study benefitted from storytelling may be that the nature of this technique is elaborative and replete with elements that can facilitate the process of idiom comprehension. Amin Afshar and Mojavezi (2017) believe that stories create apt conditions for deep involvement, which paves the ground for more meaningful understanding and better comprehension. In addition, storytelling has been claimed to be an important strategy in any classroom for several reasons.

First, it can help learners to develop their ability in interpreting actions and achieve a level of understanding beyond the limit of their experience.

They can, for example, develop the ability to understand the deeper meaning of words in a text. The second reason is that storytelling makes it possible for learners to share their experiences and, by so doing, experience higher levels of interpersonal development. There are many characters in the story that language learners can identify themselves with to express their thoughts. The third reason is that storytelling is the ideal way to help learners to get to know the amazing world of books and to develop a reading habit. This reading can, in turn, give them the experience in communicating their ideas and getting themselves across (Kirsch, 2016).

Another reason for the improvement of the participants in idiom learning through storytelling could be their level of participation in the class. Kirsch (2016) states that stories employed for the purpose of teaching language to young children promote learners' motivation and increase their willingness to involve in different tasks. Tridinanti (2018) points out that storytelling is an oral task that is developed not only for listening comprehension, but also for class participation. Therefore, it increases class involvement. Tridinanti asserts that intense eye contact between the teacher and pupils is a specific

characteristic of storytelling because such behavior can occur in natural communication; it increases the communicative ability in the classroom. In addition, some researchers believe that storytelling is a gift of understanding of self and others which can enhance the process of comprehension.

The other factor which makes storytelling beneficial for the experimental group could be the learners' level of proficiency. As storytelling consists of sequences of events which are related to each other meaningfully, the participants can make related schemata of the idioms in their mind; therefore, the comprehension and production of idioms becomes easier. Roney (2008) advocates storytelling on several grounds as follows:

First, it arises from the natural desire of humans for playfulness and entertainment. Second, it can help clarify things in our surrounding; this is because we have to develop a clear understanding of things so that we can see the logic of their evolutionary development. Third, it may account for the forces that are found in nature to satisfy our religious beliefs. Fourth, it can help us satisfy a natural desire for regular and beautiful things.

Another finding of this study was that visualization was more conducive to idiom comprehension than lexical awareness and games. This part of the finding corroborates that of studies such as Levinson (2003), who believes that visualization is very useful in every aspect of language learning, specifically idioms learning.

Other studies supporting the use of visualization as a technique to facilitate comprehension include Peters (2019), Hegarty (2004) as well as Ghader and Bahloli Niri (2016). According to Peters (2019), visual imagery can positively affect foreign language learners' vocabulary learning. Ghader and Bahloli Niri (2016) also believe that visualization can be utilized effectively to improve the level of learners' receptive and recall ability. In line with this study, Mahdiloo and Izadpanah (2017) also reported that animation clips may have positive effects on both learning and teaching of idioms.



Our next finding was that lexical awareness was more effective on Iranian EFL learners' idiom comprehension than games. The lexical approach (Lewis, 1993) pivots round the view that human language includes chunks such as idioms that are used to create meaningful text. Regarding the importance of lexical awareness, Lewis holds that learners rely on such 'chunks', as a starting point, to perceive other features of language such as morphology and to discern patterns in language.

Fotovatnia and Khaki (2012) hold the view that language is not made up of only individual lexical items; rather, it contains a substantial number of chunks. These chunks may appear in a variety of forms including multi-word units (such as idioms), fixed phrases, prefabricated patterns, as well as fully institutionalized sentential units. As the findings of this study indicate, lexical awareness has more positive effects on learners' idiom comprehension than game. This finding is in line with that of Dorkchandra (2016), who came up with the finding that drawing learners' conscious attention to lexical items could be a successful teaching strategy.

The other finding of this study was that games were less effective on l2 idioms comprehension than visualization, storytelling and lexical awareness. This finding is in contradiction with that of Shabaneh and Farrah (2019), who stress that games promote understanding, motivation and enjoyment. Further evidence against this finding comes from Rohani and Pourgharib (2013), who comment that games are motivational partly because their outcome is uncertain and their focus is on a goal that users need to achieve. Similarly, Derakhshan and Davoodi Khatir (2015) point out that games are very attractive and make learning both fun and viable. This feature can encourage educationalists and games designers to include idiomatic expressions in games, so that game players need to master such idioms to play such games successfully. Moreover, if the game includes two players, the sense of competitiveness will be increased.

The second question of this study was intended to investigate the comparative effects of storytelling, visualization, lexical awareness, and game on EFL learners' idiom production. The results suggested that the storytelling technique was the most effective followed by, visualization and lexical awareness. Games were the least effective of all techniques.

One of the reasons why storytelling can promote the level of idiom production might be its focus on contextual features of spoken language. Spoken language usually has several contextual features; these features include, but are not limited to, elements such as participants, topical content, purposes, and norms of interaction. Furthermore, in storytelling techniques, there are metaphorical conceptual elements. Previous research has confirmed the facilitative role of conceptual metaphor in students' idioms learning (Hamidzade & Mohamadi Zanozaq, 2018). Therefore, metaphor-related activities such as storytelling may be effective on idiom teaching. Lennon (1998) also advocates this technique and seems to be clearly in favour of implementing the metaphorical approach in language classes.

The other finding of this study was the significant role of visualization on idiom production compared with lexical awareness and games. This could mean that both learners and their teachers can make effective use of such techniques as the use of authentic movie clips to visualize idioms and to facilitate the way idioms are learnt and used. Support for this finding comes from studies like Levinson (2003). The idea that visualization can indeed be effective on learning and helpful in easing the pressure of learning is based on the increasingly growing evidence supporting the perceptual and conceptual source of understanding (Ghader & Bahloli Niri, 2016).

The next finding of this study was the significant effect of lexical awareness compared to games on idiom production. Pawley and Syder (1983, p. 97) contend that "lexical chunks serve as building blocks of language production and provide existing models for novelty and creation". They point out that the basis of language production and creativity in language use is the individual lexical items. In fact, it is the simple words and short phrases that allow for variation and make it possible for language users to generate very powerful and complicated patterns. That is why the advocates of the lexical approach assert that a sizable portion of language is made up of lexical

elements that get combined and produce meaningful idiomatic texts (Pawley & Syder 1983). In much the same way, the findings of Dorkchandra (2016) partially imply that awareness of the language items of a text is needed for learners to develop the ability to put those language parts together to create meaningful wholes and to communicate effectively. This way of language learning facilitates language production.

### **5. Conclusion and Implications**

This study made an attempt to address the question of whether there were any generalizable differences among storytelling, lexical awareness, game and visualization in terms of their effect on learners' idiom comprehension and production. As the results indicated, presentation techniques had positive and significant effects on both comprehension and production of idioms. The techniques employed in our study had differential effects on idiom comprehension and production.

From these findings, it might be fair to conclude that storytelling is quite an easy and effective tool to use for language learners. As Pellowski (1991) asserts, storytelling is appropriate for various age groups from childhood to adulthood because it is deeply rooted in natural human desire for fun and is, therefore, limited to any specific age levels.

The conclusion one can logically draw from the study is that language teachers can make the atmosphere of the classroom more exciting by telling stories in the class through pictures. As mentioned in the previous research, storytelling can increase the level of class participation and motivation (Tridinanti, 2018).

At the same time, due to the fact that the presentation techniques were differentially effective on both idiom comprehension and production, it may be concluded that care must be exercised in selecting these techniques depending on whether idiom comprehension or production are the prime concern of the course.

The results of the study are indicative of the following implications for language learners, teachers and material developers. This study can be helpful for language learners, because they consider idiom learning as a

complicated and demanding task. They can learn idioms through storytelling, which includes reading for pleasure. Besides, storytelling is very easy to do for language learners in different age groups.

The main implication of this study for language teachers is that they can make more informed use of presentation techniques. In addition, the teacher can make the atmosphere of the classroom more exciting by telling the story in the class through pictures. The findings can also be helpful for course designers in designing tasks and techniques that are based on visual elements. By incorporating these techniques in instructional materials, materials developers provide language learners with a set of tasks that can make the demanding task of idiom learning an easy one through indirect strategies.

It should be noted, of course, that this study was carried out under certain limitations including a small sample size, a relatively short period of treatment, and intervening factors that may not have been properly controlled. These limitations call for further research and imply that the findings should be treated with care to avoid undue overgeneralization.

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