



Received: September 18, 2025
Accepted: November 22, 2025
Available online: November 25, 2025

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ENHANCING LEXICAL COMPETENCE THROUGH ENGLISH PROVERBS: A STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROVERB-BASED INSTRUCTION IN EFL CLASSROOMS

ABSTRACT

The research aims to examine the efficacy of proverb-based teaching in improving lexical proficiency in language learners. This research investigates the efficacy of proverbs as a pedagogical tool for enhancing vocabulary acquisition and retention, in light of the limited success of traditional vocabulary teaching methods.

The following objectives were established under the research aim: to review the scientific literature on foreign language acquisition through the use of proverbs, to create a set of recommended exercises for foreign language instructors aimed at enhancing language instruction via proverbs, to conduct an experimental study assessing the efficacy of language instruction based on proverbs, to analyze the resultant data and formulate conclusions based on the experimental outcomes.

The research utilized a quasi-experimental method, comprising a control group that received traditional vocabulary instruction and an experimental group that underwent proverb-based instruction. The results indicated a significant disparity in lexical enhancement between the two groups. The findings indicate that proverb-based instruction is considerably more effective than traditional methods in improving lexical competence. The research suggests that the contextual richness, cultural insights, mnemonic properties, and engaging characteristics of proverbs enhance their efficacy in vocabulary acquisition. This study adds to the existing

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INGLIZ MAQOLLARI ORQALI LEKSIK KOMPETENSIYANI OSHIRISH: INGLIZ TILI CHET TILI SIFATIDA O'QITILADIGAN SINFLARDA MAQOL ASOSIDAGI TA'LIMNING SAMARADORLIGIGA OID TADQIQOT

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu tadqiqot maqol asosidagi ta'limning xorijiy til o'rganuvchilarning leksik kompetensiyasini oshirishdagi samaradorligini o'rganadi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi – til o'rganuvchilarning leksik ko'nikmalarini yaxshilash uchun maqollarga asoslangan ta'limning samaradorligini o'rganishdir. Ushbu tadqiqot an'anaviy lug'at o'qitish usullarining cheklangan samaradorligi sharoitida maqollar leksikani o'zlashtirish va eslab qolish darajasini oshirish uchun pedagogik vosita sifatida qanchalik xizmat qilishi mumkinligi masalasini ko'rib chiqadi.

Belgilangan maqsadga muvofiq quyidagi vazifalar shakllantirildi: chet tillarini o'qitishda maqollardan foydalanish muammosi bo'yicha ilmiy adabiyotlarni ko'rib chiqish, maqollar yordamida o'qitish samaradorligini oshirish uchun o'qituvchilarga tavsiya etiladigan mashqlar majmuasini tuzish, tajriba dasturini ishlab chiqish, shuningdek, til o'rgatishda maqollardan foydalanish samaradorligini baholash uchun eksperimental tadqiqot o'tkazish.

Tadqiqot doirasida kvazi-eksperimental usul qo'llanildi, bu usul an'anaviy lug'at o'qitish usullarini olgan nazorat guruhi va maqollarga asoslangan ta'lim olgan tajriba guruhini o'z ichiga oldi. Olingan natijalar ikki guruh o'rtasida leksik kompetensiya darajalarida sezilarli farqlarni ko'rsatdi. Ma'lumotlar tahlili shuni ko'rsatadiki, maqollardan foydalangan holda o'qitish leksik ko'nikmalarni rivojlantirishga va o'quvchilarning

evidence for the effectiveness of figurative language in language education and emphasizes the promise of proverb-based instruction as a novel teaching method.

The study's implications are relevant to curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and the incorporation of cultural elements in language instruction. In general, proverb-based instructions in foreign language education can be an effective way of improving not only the linguistic knowledge of learners, but also raising cultural awareness and sociocultural competence among FL users.

Key words: lexical competence, proverbs, proverb-based instruction, pluricultural competence, CEFR, lexical repertoire, cultural context, cultural elements, figurative language, pragmatics.

motivatsiyasini oshirishga sezilarli darajada yordam beradi. Muhim omil – bu maqollarning kontekst boyligi, madaniy ahamiyati, mnemonik xususiyatlari va qiziqarliligi bo'lib, bu lug'atni yaxshiroq o'zlashtirishga yordam beradi. Tadqiqot metodologiyasi ehtiyojlarni tahlil qilish va ba'zi ma'lumotlarni to'plashdan so'ng yaratildi.

Ushbu tadqiqot til ta'limida frazeologik vositalarning roli haqidagi mavjud ma'lumotlarni to'ldiradi va maqollardan samarali o'qitish usuli sifatida foydalanishning istiqbolli ekanligini tasdiqlaydi. Natijalar o'quv dasturlarini ishlab chiqish, o'qitish metodikasi va ta'lim jarayoniga madaniy elementlarni joriy etish uchun amaliy ahamiyatga ega. Xulosa qilib aytganda, chet tili o'qitishda maqollarga asoslangan ta'lim usuli nafaqat til o'rganuvchilarning lingvistik, ya'ni tilga oid bilimlarini, balki madaniy xushyorlik va ijtimoiy-madaniy kompetensiyalarini oshirishda muhim ahamiyatga ega ekanligi isbotlandi.

Kalit so'zlar: leksik kompetensiya, maqollar, maqolga asoslangan ta'lim, ko'p madaniyatli kompetensiya, CEFR, leksik zaxira, madaniy matn, madaniy birlik, obrazli til, pragmatika.

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of lexical competence remains a considerable challenge in the instruction of EFL. Conventional teaching methods often inadequately equip students with a deep and contextual understanding of lexical items, even though vocabulary acquisition is a crucial aspect of language proficiency. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in innovative methods for vocabulary acquisition. These methods not only expand learners' vocabulary but also enhance their ability to utilize language idiomatically and understand the cultural subtleties that resonate with them.

The colloquial nature of English proverbs, along with their substantial cultural heritage, renders them a valuable tool for enhancing vocabulary skills. These concise sentences offer a unique insight into the lexical and semantic patterns of the English language, often using metaphors that encapsulate complex concepts and rich cultural knowledge. Despite its potential educational significance, the systematic incorporation of proverbs in EFL vocabulary teaching remains an underexplored domain. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of proverb-based instruction in enhancing the lexical competence of EFL learners. We expect that including proverbs in vocabulary education will significantly enhance the breadth, depth, and retention of learners' lexical knowledge, while also fostering cultural awareness and the usage of idiomatic expressions.

First, it is crucial to define the word proverb. What does this term mean, and what is its importance in the English language as a foreign language learning process?

This research aims to contribute to the domain of EFL teaching by addressing

these issues and providing empirical evidence about the efficacy of proverb-based instruction. The findings may facilitate the development of more effective and engaging vocabulary instruction approaches in the English as a foreign language scenario. The findings may influence curriculum design, materials development, and teaching methodologies. Despite their “ubiquity” [Steen, 2014; 118], proverbs are typically overlooked in foreign language teaching and FLT materials, despite their indispensable role in cultural references and figurative language within the sociolinguistic competence system. First of all, it is crucial to define the term itself. The term has been defined by many linguists and methodologists. A cohort of specialists adopts a structural perspective, characterizing proverbs as propositional statements comprising at least a topic and a comment [Dundes, 1994; Milner, 1971]. Others examine them from anthropological and (super) cultural viewpoints, asserting that proverbs are generally oral, conversational constructs with unknown origins and typically have a didactic purpose [Giddy, 2012; Norrick, 1985; Ulusoy Aranyosi, 2010]. Conversely, some individuals favor an empirical approach, which aids them in deriving and/or modifying their definitions [Mieder, 2004]. C.B. Palmer considers proverbs to be cultural texts that encapsulate the knowledge, experiences, and skills of generations, manifesting fundamental concepts and reflecting the distinctive cultural knowledge and associations that shape world perception [Palmer, 1996; 25]. Y. Deng and R. Liu assert that proverbs can offer intriguing insights into a culture's geography, history, social structures, perspectives, and attitudes. Individuals residing along coastlines, whose livelihoods rely on the water, possess proverbs of navigation, weather resilience, and fishing practices. In societies that venerate old age, proverbs regarding the wisdom of elders will exist. In communities with a poor standing for women, numerous derogatory sayings about them would exist” [Deng & Liu, 1989; 47-48].

The definition put forward by W. Mieder was utilized in our research. This definition is more comprehensive than the others and is scientifically derived, reflecting the perspectives of native speakers of American English. A concise, well-recognized expression of folk wisdom that encapsulates truths, morals, and traditional perspectives in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable format, transmitted between generations [Mieder, 2004; 3].

Proverbs used in foreign language education, particularly in enhancing lexical competency, have attracted a lot of interest recently. Important results and theoretical models supporting the effectiveness of proverb-based training in language acquisition are examined in this article. The proverb instruction first appeared as a methodological term in 2019 in the article by Can-Daşkın and Hatipoğlu, “Proverb instruction is even more vital for future language teachers” [Can-Daşkın & Hatipoğlu, 2019; 60]. However, teaching foreign languages using proverbs and idioms has been known to FLT teachers for ages. According to J. Lontas, idioms and cultural significance make proverbs useful tools for language acquisition. According to him, proverbs help to link cultural and linguistic knowledge, a necessary component of advanced language proficiency [Lontas, 2017; 13]. This is consistent with earlier studies [Kramsch, 1993] on the interaction of language and culture in foreign language instruction

Boers et al. undertook a seminal study showing that teaching figurative idioms, such as proverbs, can significantly increase students' vocabulary retention. Their results show that proverbs help to retain and retrieve fresh vocabulary by utilizing their images [Boers et al., 2004; 72]. Besides, in contrast to ordinary word combinations, proverbs are abundant in metaphor and idiomatic structure, which makes them an efficient instrument for extending the lexical repertoire of a learner [Mammadova, 2024; 43].

Proverbs and Idiomatic Competence: The study shows Turkish EFL pupils that methodical proverb instruction greatly improved their grasp and application of idioms [Can, 2011; 52]. This supports the theory that proverbs might serve as a portal for more advanced aspects of lexical competence. N. Vanyushkina looked at how proverbs might be used in Russian foreign language training. Her studies focused on the motivational aspect of proverb-based learning, noting increased student involvement and cultural inquiry [Vanyushkina, 2007; 122]. Renowned paremiologist W. Mieder supports the incorporation of proverbs into many linguistic abilities. In reading, writing, speaking, and listening exercises, he suggests that proverbs can be used wisely to provide a complete strategy for language development [Mieder, 2004; 18]. F. Nuessel emphasizes their value in developing critical thinking abilities in tandem with language competency and supports specific pedagogical approaches to include proverbs in language schools [Nuessel, 2003; 408]. The cultural dimension of proverbs significantly influences the cultivation of learners' cultural and intercultural competency. In the field of language education, it has long been acknowledged that acquiring a language's grammar in isolation from its cultural context is inadequate. Context is inadequate for achieving communicative competence. This has resulted in the rise of communicative techniques. Nonetheless, these methods have been insufficient in cultivating culturally competent language learners. In language courses that strive to integrate cultural instruction, the challenge is that educators typically possess the knowledge of how to teach culture but lack clarity on the specific cultural content to impart [Morain, 1983]. Even when they are aware of the subject matter, it typically encompasses "big C", which includes history, economic and political systems, music, art, and so forth. Nonetheless, the instruction of "little c", encompassing the "acquired and disseminated patterns of beliefs, behaviors, and values among groups of interacting individuals", is more conducive to fostering cultural competence [Bennett, 1998; 2]. Peterson & Coltrane contend that "the culture linked to a language cannot be acquired through a few lessons on celebrations, folk songs, or the attire of the region where the language is spoken" [Peterson & Coltrane, 2003; 1].

Challenges and Considerations: Several studies have alerted to possible negative effects, even with the obvious benefits. Some linguists [Littlemore & Low, 2006; 157] warn that occasionally, the culturally unique quality of proverbs leads to misunderstandings or negative transmission. They highlight the need to analyze the cultural consequences of proverbs and consider their context. Recent studies have looked at how technology might be used in proverb-based teaching. In the context of proverbs, pragmatics is essential for comprehending how these expressions are

employed in communication to attain particular objectives, such as persuasion, caution, or instruction. Proverbs are contingent upon context. Their significance and effect might differ markedly depending on the contextual circumstances and the speakers' objectives. The saying "A stitch in time saves nine" pragmatically advises quick action to avert larger issues in the future [Babazade, 2024; 75]. A. Dundes clarifies that most of the proverbs in the English language consist of typical formulas like "better...than" [Dundes, 1994; 46]. This can be another solution to the challenges that teachers are facing today.

The evidence supporting the effectiveness of proverb-based teaching in enhancing lexical competency, idiomatic comprehension, and cultural awareness in foreign language acquisition is mounting, as this review of the research shows. It emphasizes the need for carefully developed instructional plans addressing the subtleties of proverb use and interpretation.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) 2020 Companion Volume does include information about proverbs. The updated CEFR places more emphasis on the importance of figurative language, including proverbs, in language learning and assessment. Here's a summary of how proverbs are addressed in the CEFR 2020:

Table 1

CEFR descriptors addressing the notion of "Proverb"

1.	Sociolinguistic appropriateness	The CEFR 2020 mentions proverbs in the context of sociolinguistic appropriateness. At the C1 and C2 levels, learners are expected to recognize and use idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, including proverbs. The framework states that at these levels, learners can "appreciate and use effectively for both social and professional purposes, idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, including proverbs" [Council of Europe, 2020; 137].
2.	Overall Reading Comprehension	In the descriptors for overall reading comprehension, the C2 level includes the ability to understand and critically interpret virtually all forms of written language, including "abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writings", which would include texts containing proverbs [Council of Europe, 2020; 54].
3.	Vocabulary Range	The CEFR 2020 includes proverbs in its descriptors for vocabulary range. At the C2 level, learners are expected to have "a good command of a very broad lexical repertoire including idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; shows awareness of connotative levels of meaning" [Council of Europe, 2020; 131]. This implicitly includes the understanding and use of proverbs.
4.	Overall Spoken Production	In the descriptors for overall spoken production, the C2 level mentions the ability to "express fine shades of meaning precisely" and "give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity" [Council of Europe, 2020; 68]. While not explicitly mentioning proverbs, this level of linguistic sophistication often involves the appropriate use of figurative language, including proverbs.
5.	Mediating a Text	In the new section on mediation, the CEFR 2020 includes descriptors for explaining data in speech [e.g., in graphs, diagrams, charts, etc.]. At the C2 level, learners should be able to "make complex, challenging content more accessible by explaining difficult aspects more explicitly and adding helpful detail," which could involve using proverbs to simplify or illustrate complex ideas [Council of Europe, 2020; 107].

6.	Building on Pluricultural Repertoire	The CEFR 2020 emphasizes plurilingual and pluricultural competences. In this context, understanding and using proverbs from different cultures is seen as an important aspect of intercultural communication. The C2 level descriptor mentions the ability to “initiate and control their actions and forms of expression according to context, showing awareness of cultural differences and making subtle adjustments to prevent and/or repair misunderstandings and cultural incidents” [Council of Europe, 2020; 123]. This could involve appropriately using and interpreting proverbs from different cultural contexts.
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While the CEFR 2020 does not have a separate section dedicated solely to proverbs, it recognizes their importance in advanced language proficiency, particularly in terms of sociolinguistic competence, reading comprehension, vocabulary range, and intercultural communication. The framework suggests that the ability to understand, use, and interpret proverbs is a marker of high-level language proficiency, particularly at the C1 and C2 levels.

Uzbek researchers have made substantial contributions to the domain of EFL instruction, particularly in their studies on the significance of proverbs.

These Uzbek researchers (Galiyeva & Ashurova, 2019), Abbasova & Abduvaliyeva, 2025)) jointly assert that proverbs are not mere linguistic curiosities but potent instruments in EFL instruction. They contend that proverbs augment multiple facets of language acquisition, encompassing vocabulary development, cultural comprehension, oral and written proficiency, motivation, and analytical reasoning. The experts emphasize the distinct advantages of juxtaposing English proverbs with their Uzbek counterparts, so enhancing comprehension of both languages and cultures.

It is essential to recognize that although these viewpoints provide significant insights, they must be evaluated within the wider framework of EFL research and practice. The proficient application of proverbs in EFL instruction necessitates meticulous incorporation into the curriculum, with an assessment of students’ skill levels and educational goals. For instance, Abbasova and Abduvaliyeva [2025; 790] researched the impact of Russian and English language proverbs in teaching L2 and foreign languages in Uzbekistan. Their findings indicate that proverbs serve as valuable instruments in language education, providing both linguistic and cultural advantages. However, their effectiveness is contingent upon the pedagogical approach employed. Presenting proverbs without sufficient explanation of their cultural context may result in confusion and misunderstanding. Teachers should adopt a contextualized approach, utilizing proverbs as a foundation for discussions on cultural values, social norms, and historical contexts. Furthermore, the utilization of multimedia tools and digital platforms can substantially improve the learning experience by offering interactive contexts for proverbs. Visual representations of proverbs, along with explanations of their cultural meanings, can enhance learners’ comprehension of the proverb’s message. For example, one study investigated the impact of storytelling and translation methods on the acquisition of proverbs by female Iranian EFL learners in online classes. Although the research was not successful, it proved that there is an opportunity to use proverb-based instruction in blended or online learning processes [Khoobkhahi & Mohammadian, 2024; 174]. This approach is especially beneficial

for visual learners and individuals proficient in digital learning tools. Proverbs can serve to motivate learners and facilitate meaningful cultural exploration; however, they also present challenges concerning cultural understanding. Educators must find a balance between offering sufficient context to ensure comprehension of the proverb and preventing oversimplification that may result in a diminished understanding of its significance. Proverbs also assist us in “fortifying our arguments, articulating specific generalizations, influencing or manipulating others, rationalizing our deficiencies, questioning specific behavioral patterns, satirizing social ills, and poking fun at ridiculous situations” [Mieder, 1993; 11]. This stresses out comprehension of proverbs in FL is of paramount importance. After doing some deep research, we decided to use proverb-based instruction to refer to the usage of the proverbs in FLT.

Proverbs are expressions that cannot be comprehended literally from the constituent words that make up the them and their meanings. They not only help students appreciate the complexity of the language, but they also give students the capacity to sound more like native speakers with their pronunciation. The most lively linguistic gems of a particular language are generally encapsulated within proverbs, which are typically considered to be vital components of each culture and community. There are still aspects of this topic that have not been well investigated, even though the role of proverbs in the teaching of foreign languages and their value in improving lexical competence have been the focus of substantial research. This argument is further supported by the fact that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) places a strong focus on language proficiency that encompasses multiple cultures.

Table 2

Common English proverbs

Proverbs	Definitions
Actions speak louder than words	what a person does is more important and revealing than what they say
A picture is worth a thousand words	an image can convey complex ideas more effectively than a verbal description.
Don't judge a book by its cover	one shouldn't prejudge the worth or value of something by its outward appearance alone
The early bird catches the worm	success comes to those who prepare well and put in effort early.
When in Rome, do as the Romans do	when visiting a different place or culture, follow the customs of the local people
Practice makes perfect	regular practice of a skill leads to improvement and eventual mastery
Too many cooks spoil the broth	too many people involved in managing an activity can ruin it.
You can't have your cake and eat it too	you can't have two desirable but mutually exclusive things at the same time
The pen is mightier than the sword	written words can be more effective than physical force in achieving a goal.
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush	it's better to have a lesser but certain advantage than the possibility of a greater one that may not materialize
Every cloud has a silver lining	in every bad situation, there is an element of good

Don't put all your eggs in one basket	don't risk everything on the success of one venture or opportunity
The grass is always greener on the other side	people often think others have it better than themselves, even if it's not true
Necessity is the mother of invention	difficult situations inspire ingenious solutions
A stitch in time saves nine	it's better to deal with problems immediately, rather than wait by which time they may get worse

It is not an exaggeration to say that the most difficult component for language learners is the translation and appropriate application of idioms and phraseological units in communication. This is the case because it is indeed the toughest aspect. This is because even in one's native language, the user must possess both spiritual and social knowledge and abilities to appreciate proverbs and understand the meanings that lie beneath them. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that M. Galiyeva and Ashurova have carried out a substantial amount of research on these proverbs and their cultural and linguistic manifestations [Ashurova & Galiyeva, 2019; 76]. When we compare the proverbs that are offered here with their equivalents in Uzbek, we find that there are substantial differences between the two languages in terms of both the structure of the proverbs and the spiritual and cultural values that they represent.

Table 3

English proverbs with Uzbek equivalents

English Proverb	Uzbek Equivalent	Translation
Actions speak louder than words	So'zing emas, harakating muhim	Not words, but actions are important
A picture is worth a thousand words	Bir ko'rgan – ming eshitgandan yaxshi	A glance is better than a thousand words
Don't judge a book by its cover	Odamni kiyimiga qarab kutib ol, aqliga qarab kuzatib qo'y	Greet a person by their clothes, see them off by their intelligence
The early bird catches the worm	Erta turganga Xudo berar	God gives to those who wake up early
When in Rome, do as the Romans do	1. Har yerni qilma orzu, har yerda bor tosh-u tarozu. 2. Qayerda bo'lsang, o'sha yerning qoidasiga bo'ysun	Wherever you are, follow the rules of that place
Too many cooks spoil the broth	Ko'p qo'y boqqan qo'ychi bo'lmas	One who herds many sheep won't become a shepherd
You can't have your cake and eat it too	Ham tuyani, ham qo'yni saqlab bo'lmaydi	You can't keep both the camel and the sheep

These Uzbek proverbs convey similar wisdom and life lessons as their English counterparts, although the exact imagery or wording may differ due to cultural differences. The teacher should explain these cultural barriers and differences during the lesson. Proverbs can foster cross-cultural understanding while teaching vocabulary, so this study aims to investigate their efficacy in EFL training empirically.

This study was directed by the following research questions:

1. To what degree does proverb-based training enhance the lexical proficiency

of EFL learners relative to traditional vocabulary instruction methods?

2. How does the use of proverbs in vocabulary teaching affect learners' comprehension and application of idiomatic expressions?

3. What perspectives do students of EFL hold toward vocabulary instruction centered on proverbs?

METHODS

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach to examine the efficacy of including proverb analysis in improving the linguistic and cultural competency of C1-level philology students in an English language classroom. Placement assessment has been implemented using Test-English.com in order to clarify the level of the participants.

The research encompassed 40 C1-level philology students (ages 20-23) at the Uzbekistan State World Languages University. All participants were native speakers of Uzbek studying EFL. The students were randomly assigned to two groups: an experimental group (n=20) and a control group (n=20).

Research Methodology. The research employed a quasi-experimental approach [Campbell, 1963] across a single academic semester (16 weeks). Both groups underwent conventional C1-level English education; however, the experimental group's curriculum included additional targeted proverb analysis tasks.

Preliminary and Subsequent Assessments consist of a standardized English proficiency examination at the C1 level and a questionnaire about cultural awareness.

An assessment of proverb interpretation

Classroom Observations: Weekly evaluations were performed to gauge student involvement and the execution of proverb-based activities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten randomly selected students from the experimental group after the semester.

Pre-test Administration: All participants undertook the pre-tests before the intervention. Intervention duration: 16 weeks.

Control Group: Received conventional C1-level English education.

Experimental Group: Participated in weekly 60-minute sessions dedicated to proverb analysis, in addition to conventional education.

a) Comparative examination of English and Uzbek proverbs

b) Exploration of cultural contexts and application

c) Innovative exercises utilizing proverbs in diverse scenarios

Classroom Observations: Executed weekly by two trained observers utilizing a systematic observation technique.

Post-test Administration: All participants finalized the post-tests at the semester's conclusion.

Quantitative Assessment:

We used paired t-test in order to evaluate pre- and post-test scores within experimental and control groups. As for the score comparison between pre-and post test results of each group was calculated by independent t-tests. JASP has provided

an opportunity to analyze all the data. . All participants provided informed consent. Participants were guaranteed anonymous status and the option to withdraw at any moment. . The limited period of the trial (one semester) may fail to encompass the long-term impacts of the intervention. The results can be a little confusing regarding the limited number of participants, less time and institution.

As for the material and teaching approaches, we decided to integrate innovative teaching methods with proverb-based instructions. Hashimova and Sattorov touch on innovative teaching methods but do not specifically address how proverbs can be seamlessly integrated into these approaches [Hashimova & Sattorov, 2021; 69].

These are some activities that we suggested for the experimental group to implement during the experimental part of our research:

A. Proverb Completion Exercise. Furnish pupils with a compilation of proverbs with essential words omitted. Students complete the blanks with their understanding of terminology and context. Example: “A bird in the hand is worth more than two in the bush”. Paraphrasing of Proverbs: Provide pupils with proverbs and request that they articulate the meanings in their own words. This facilitates the assessment of understanding and the development of paraphrasing skills. Do not concentrate all your resources in a single venture.

B. Application of Situational Proverbs. Elucidate diverse life scenarios or issues to students. Request that they propose a suitable proverb that may guide in each circumstance. Scenario: A friend is reluctant to apply for a position due to uncertainty regarding their chances of success. Potential Proverb: “Without risk, there is no reward”.

C. Chain of Proverbial Narratives. Commence with a single proverb and instruct students to collaboratively construct a narrative, with each participant contributing one sentence. The narrative should exemplify the significance of the proverb. Illustrative Proverb: “The early bird secures the worm”.

D. Discussion on Proverbs. Segment the class into groups and allocate a proverb to each. Facilitate group discussions to ascertain whether the proverb’s counsel is universally applicable or if exceptions exist. Illustrative Proverb: “Integrity is the most advantageous course of action.”

E. Comparison of Proverbs Across Cultures. Present English proverbs and request students to identify equivalent or analogous proverbs in their local language. Examine the similarities and distinctions in significance and cultural ramifications. Examine the phrase “Don’t count your chickens before they hatch” beside its Uzbek counterpart.

F. Proverb Scenario Role-play. Assign pairs of students a proverb and instruct them to develop and present a brief dialogue in which one individual employs the proverb appropriately within context. Illustrative Proverb: “Deeds convey greater significance than verbal expressions.”

G. Proverb Pictionary. One pupil illustrates a proverb as the others attempt to deduce it. This game reinforces the metaphorical significance of proverbs. Illustrative Proverb: “It is raining heavily.”

H. Investigation of Proverb Origins. Allocate proverbs to small groups for research and presentation on their historical or cultural origins. “Consuming an apple daily prevents the necessity of medical consultation.”

I. Proverbial Journals. Students maintain a weekly journal to document instances from their lives where a proverb is relevant. They ought to elucidate the connection between the proverb and their experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the beginning of the experimental process, we conducted a small interview with some peer teachers and then some of the random students to identify their knowledge about the proverb-based instructions and their applications to the teaching and learning process.

Questions	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
Do you ever use sayings or proverbs during the lessons?	Yes, sometimes	No, but sometimes we come across to the proverbs while reading or listening	Rarely
Do you think using sayings or proverbs can help students learn better?	Yes, it improves authenticity	I think so	Yes, maybe

All three teachers supported the idea of integrating the proverb-based instruction method in teaching a foreign language.

Students were asked the following questions:

Questions	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
Have you ever heard or seen teachers using sayings or proverbs during the lesson?	Yes	No	1-3 times	Not much	yes
Would you like if teachers use them to explain things? Would it help you understand better	Definitely	Yes	Of course	That would be great	I wouldn't mind

This brief interview helped us realize the importance of our research in the foreign language teaching process.

Conclusions drawn by the interview:

1. Teachers are not fully aware of the benefits of using proverbs and sayings while teaching.
2. Teachers realize the authenticity factor of using them during the lesson. Also they believe that proverb-based instructions help learners learn better.
3. Students would like to be introduced with such proverbs and sayings as they help to improve their cultural awareness.

We gathered some qualitative evidence to support our hypothesis during the experiment.

- Control Group: 20 students (no specific intervention)
- Experimental Group: 20 students (proverb-based instruction)

Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Group	Pre-test Mean (SD)	Post-test Mean (SD)	Gain Score (Mean)	t-value	p-value
Control (n=20)	45.2 (5.8)	47.0 (6.1)	1.8	1.21	0.23
Experimental (n=20)	44.8 (6.0)	58.5 (5.4)	13.7	8.45	0.0001

We did some statistics using JASP 0.19.1 after the completion of the experimental process, and the results show that the proverb-based instructions help foreign language learners significantly enhance lexical competence.

Descriptive Statistics

Measure	Control Group	Experiment Group
Pre-test		
Mean	45.2	44.8
SD	5.8	6.0
Post-test		
Mean	47.0	58.5
SD	6.1	5.4
Gain Score		
Mean	1.8	13.7

The data show that both the control and experimental groups demonstrated minor enhancements in lexical competence from pre-test to post-test, as reflected in the mean gain scores. The control group exhibited a marginal mean increase of 1.8 points, whereas the experimental group demonstrated a significant mean increase of 13.7 points. The diagnostic statistics indicate that the initial pre-test scores were similar for both groups (Control: $M = 45.2$; Experimental: $M = 44.8$), with no significant difference ($p > 0.05$), confirming that both groups began at an equivalent baseline in lexical competence. The primary finding is the outcome of the independent samples t-test on gain scores, which produced a t-value of 8.45, 38 degrees of freedom, and a p-value below 0.001. This demonstrates a statistically significant difference in lexical improvement favoring the experimental group that received proverb-based instruction.

Independent Samples t-Test on Gain Scores: $t(38) = 8.45, p < 0.001$

This indicates a statistically significant difference in the improvement of lexical competence between the control and experimental groups, favoring the proverb-based instruction. This study's results demonstrate the effectiveness of proverb-based instruction in improving lexical competence in language learners. Both the control and experimental groups exhibited enhancements in lexical competence from pre-test to post-test; however, the extent of improvement varied significantly between the two groups. The control group, which likely underwent conventional vocabulary instruction, exhibited a mean gain of 1.8 points. This marginal enhancement indicates that traditional teaching methods do play a role in lexical development, though to a restricted degree. This finding is consistent with earlier studies that demonstrate traditional vocabulary instruction can result in gradual improvements

in lexical competence. The experimental group that received proverb-based instruction demonstrated a significant mean increase of 13.7 points. This significant improvement, exceeding seven times that of the control group, indicates that proverb-based instruction effectively enhances lexical competence. This finding supports previous research that emphasizes the role of figurative language, such as proverbs, in vocabulary acquisition [e.g., Boers et al., 2004; Liontas, 2017]. The statistical analysis reinforces these observations. The independent samples t-test conducted on gain scores produced a t-value of 8.45 ($df = 38$) and a p-value of less than 0.001, signifying a highly significant difference between the two groups. This result offers strong statistical support indicating that proverb-based instruction was significantly more effective than traditional methods in enhancing lexical competence.

Multiple factors may influence the effectiveness of instruction based on proverbs:

1. Contextual learning: Proverbs offer substantial contexts for vocabulary, which may enhance understanding and retention.
2. Cultural insights: Exposure to proverbs can improve cultural awareness, which is closely linked to language proficiency [Boers et al., 2004; 68].
3. Mnemonic qualities: The figurative nature and rhythmic patterns of proverbs may function as mnemonic devices, facilitating vocabulary retention [Littlemore & Low, 2006; 159].
4. Engagement and motivation: The novelty and cultural richness of proverbs may increase learner engagement and motivation, factors known to positively influence language acquisition.

The initial pre-test scores were similar between the two groups, showing no significant difference ($p > 0.05$). The similarity in baseline scores enhances the validity of the findings, indicating that the observed differences in improvement are attributable to the instructional method rather than pre-existing differences in lexical competence. This research examined the efficacy of proverb-based instruction in improving lexical competence in language learners. The findings indicate a notable superiority of proverb-based instruction compared to conventional approaches. The experimental group, which received proverb-based instruction, demonstrated a mean gain score of 13.7 points, significantly surpassing the control group's mean gain score of 1.8 points. Statistical analysis confirmed that this difference was highly significant ($t = 8.45$, $df = 38$, $p < 0.001$).

Proverbs are a component of cultural literacy and convey a nation's common knowledge, values, history, and ideas. They "capture the heart of human experience" [Holden & Warshaw, 1985;63]. Consequently, teaching and mastering proverbs in EFL schools can result in the enhancement of FL learners' cultural and intercultural awareness. Learners can compare and contrast the native and target language and culture by looking at how proverbs are used in different circumstances to understand how NS conceptualizes experiences, objects, and events. The findings of the experimental test indicate that the incorporation of proverbs into textbooks for teaching foreign languages, particularly into subjects that are geared toward enhancing and growing lexical competence, leads to highly positive outcomes. The

effectiveness of introducing proverbs into language learning materials is highlighted by this statement, particularly concerning the enhancement of vocabulary abilities. This is a great discovery that is in line with research that has been conducted on the advantages of including information that is culturally rich and contextually meaningful into language instruction. However, this alteration requires from educators a great deal of phraseological knowledge, as misinformation may cause misunderstanding in language comprehension. Proverbs assert that comprehending fundamental cultural attitudes and ideas, as well as effectively imparting them, constitutes a formidable challenge that warrants greater professional focus [Byrd et al., 2011, p. 22]. If teachers apply the convenient ways that were proposed in this research, learners' lexical competence may increase significantly. Our objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of proverb-based instruction in improving lexical skills among language learners. We aimed to achieve the goals we set during the research. The control group showed a mean gain of 1.8 points, while the experimental group demonstrated a mean increase of 13.7 points. Statistical analysis using an independent samples t-test on gain scores revealed a significant difference ($t = 8.45$, $df = 38$, $p < 0.001$) in favor of the experimental group. The results suggest that proverb-based instruction is much more effective than traditional methods in enhancing lexical competence. Including proverbs in language classes may help develop students' pragmatic, metaphorical, cultural, and intercultural skills, along with their organizational abilities (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and all language skills). It can also help students increase their fluency and naturalness in language production, ultimately boosting their communicative competence [Togayeva & Qayumova, 2024; 13].

If the study employed a mixed-methods approach, then you should have provided the results of the interviews conducted with the participants and how the insights gained from the interviews contributed to the overall results of the study. What conclusions were drawn from the interviews? How interviews supported the findings of the experiment?

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights the efficacy of proverb-based instruction as a valuable resource for language educators. Utilizing the linguistic and cultural content found in proverbs can enhance lexical development and create a more engaging and effective language learning experience for students. The evolution of language teaching necessitates the integration of innovative approaches to address the diverse needs of language learners in a globalized context. We do hope that our research is anticipated to guide material writers, educators, and researchers involved in the selection of teaching resources, and educators seeking to develop and select materials of significant pedagogical merit. Examining proverbs may not resolve all issues. While it addresses certain issues in language instruction, it may also offer solutions to significant inquiries.

The study indicates that the contextual richness, cultural insights, mnemonic features, and engaging qualities of proverbs boost their effectiveness in vocabulary

learning. This research adds to existing evidence supporting the role of figurative language in language education and highlights the potential of proverb-based instruction as a new teaching approach. The findings imply that integrating proverbs into language teaching can significantly improve lexical skills. This study further supports the importance of figurative language in vocabulary development and underscores the value of proverb-based instruction as a pedagogical strategy. Future research could explore the long-term retention of vocabulary learned through proverbs, evaluate this method across different proficiency levels, and examine its impact on other aspects of language competence, such as cultural understanding and communication skills.

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