The Use of Support Materials in Teaching English: A Case Study in Iranian Educational System

Yousef Bakhshizadeh Gashti,

Assistant Professor, Chabahar Maritime University, Iran.

yousefbakhshi@gmail.com

bakhshizadeh@cmu.ac.ir

Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the role of various types of support materials in language classes in Iran. To achieve this objective, a questionnaire consisting of fourteen items was given to a group of thirty experienced language teachers in Iran. This group of teachers had at least ten years teaching experience. They were expected to give their views about the usefulness of seven types of support materials: cartoons, newspaper middles, folks, anecdotes, riddles, jokes, and proverbs. Also, they gave their views about the types of modifications that can be made in support materials to make them more effective. The data collected by the questionnaire indicated that cartoon (%88) is the most effective supporting material in EFL classroom. This is followed by newspaper middle (%69), anecdote (%57), and folktale (%49). Based on the collected data, it was concluded that any plan for making modifications in support materials must be made by taking into consideration the socio-cultural, ideological, and religious issues. In other words, the points of contrast between the two sides (source language and target language) in terms of socio-cultural, ideological, and religious issues must be excluded from those support materials that are going to be used in language classrooms in Iran.

 Key words: Support materials; EFL classroom; Socio-cultural issues; Ideological issues

Introduction

Effective use of support materials in language classrooms has always been a salient subject of discussion among language educators. There is no doubt that support materials are crucially important in every curriculum. They are regarded as the tools that assist teachers and curriculum designers (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). Support materials improve the interaction between teachers and learners, with the aim of improving learner performance (Fleisch, Taylor, Herholdt & Sapire, 2011). One of the most important questions is the type of support materials that are suitable for a particular group of learner. It cannot be claimed that a certain supporting material is suitable and useful for all group of learners in all situations. Level of language learner, their age, cultural context, and many other factors might play a significant role in this regard. Jadhav (2011) has discussed several types of support materials that can be employed in language classrooms, including cartoon, newspaper middle, folk tale, anecdote, riddle, crossword puzzle, joke, proverb, malapropism, and limerick. He says that cartoon can be used to activate students' knowledge and to create a relaxed and enjoyable environment in the classroom. Cartoon is a direct and simple tool for making connection with the common people; it is simple in style, message, and content (Abraham, 1987).

Newspaper middles are very precise parts of newspapers and can function as an effective tool for starting a discussion in the classroom. Folk tales are oral stories that are transferred from generation to generation to emphasize moral and ethical values. Folk tales belonging to various cultures can be interesting subjects for discussion in the classroom. They can be powerful tools to strengthen inter-cultural understanding. Bar, East, and Thomas (2007) have presented a detailed discussion about multicultural literature for children. Literary tools can effectively be used to bridge the gaps between cultures. Novels and picture books can also be efficient tools for understanding diversity across cultures (Knowles & Smith, 2007). According to Davis, Brown, Liedel-Rice, and Soeder (2005), children's understanding of diversity among cultures can significantly be improved through multicultural literature. Lowery and Sabis-Burns (2007) say that multicultural literature is a way for transforming cross-cultural borders into cross-cultural bridges. Anecdote is a short amusing story that is intended to communicate a message as briefly as possible. If used properly, anecdotes can be an excellent point for starting a discussion. A riddle is a puzzling question that can be used in language classroom to test the intelligence and level of language proficiency. In addition to these two functions, riddles can tactfully be used to teach linguistic points to language learners. Crossword puzzle is a word game in which some clues are used to guess the words that fit into the puzzle. Crossword puzzles that are used in the classroom must be suitable for the level of learners. Murthi (2000) presents a detailed discussion on the strategies through which

crossword puzzles can be solved and employed in classroom in order to maximize learners' involvement in class activities. Joke is another type of support material that can be employed in language classroom to elicit learners' interpretations of an event. Joke is a good tool to enliven the atmosphere of the classroom and to encourage learners to have a discussion on a topic. Proverb is a short sentence that is used to give an advice or to emphasize a point. Proverbs have their roots in cultures; they are handed down from generation to generation. In language classroom, proverbs can be employed to improve cross-cultural understanding. According to the Mieder (2004), in language classroom, proverbs can play a major role in the teaching as a part of cultural and metaphorical learning. Malapropism takes place when one word is mistaken for another word that resembles it. Malapropism can be used to make learners aware of minor pronunciation differences between some words (Jadhav, 2011). Finally, limerick is a kind of non-serious poem that might not have any sense in some cases. However, because of its humorous nature, it can be a motivating tool in the context of classroom. In addition to these seven types of support materials, there are many other tools that are emerging in language institutions as a result of advances in technology. In the next section, a number of studies that have been conducted on the efficiency of such support materials are reviewed.

Review of the literature

Cartoons

According to van Wyk (2011), there is little doubt that humor, both in pictorial and verbal forms, is useful as a device for maintaining attention and interest among language learners. Ziv (1979) says that if the introduction of a concept is followed by a humorous example and further explanation, test performance is significantly improved. Modern educational theory highlights the importance of interactivity and involvement (Ramsden 1992; Biggs 1999). When a teacher uses humor such as cartoons and is able to stimulate the students to laugh or smile, s/he can be sure that students have been engaged in classroom activities (Ziegler 1998). Giunta (2010) says that cartoons and comics tools can be effective tools for making learning an enjoyable and memorable experience. Oliveri (2007) emphasizes that cartoons and comics can be the starting point for a thoughtful conversation, and open the doors for teacher and students to discuss current events, values, and morals.

Jokes and riddles

Humor is one of the effective tools that can be used to create a friendly atmosphere in language classroom. According to Vega (1989), the humorous competence should be fostered in language classroom since most individuals enjoy being surrounded by others who have a good sense of humor. Yan Zhao (1988) emphasizes that jokes are not only for having fun, but also for helping students to learn about the habits and values of a society different from their own.

Discussing the ways that jokes can be employed in language classroom, Possenti (2001) says that if an individual is not able to understand the humorous point of a joke, it is due to the lack of either sufficient linguistic knowledge or knowledge of the world. This is particularly the case with speakers of other languages. Thus, teachers have to provide the necessary information so that students can make sense of a joke and understand its humorous intention. Cultures may differ in what is considered humorous. This is an important point that must not be ignored by teachers. According to Possenti (2001), there is just one interpretation for a given joke and it has to be understood as the joke is told. If a joke has to be explained, then its comic feature disappears altogether. A lot of information is unexpressed in every joke. However, this is the unsaid information that makes a joke humorous.

Chiaro (1992) says that if a joke is too closely linked to a specific characteristic of a culture, it may not be understood by people from foreign cultures. Therefore, jokes/riddles that are used in a language classroom should be selected with great care. The narrator of the joke wants the reader/listener to understand the humor that is implicit and is incorporated in the discourse. In fact, humor lies on what is unexpressed and on inference. Cook (2000, p. 150) emphasizes the need "to develop the notion of a play element in language learning in which understanding of language play may influence ideas about every aspect of teaching and learning: from the initial motivation, through the interim means, to the final goals".

Anecdotes

By listening to anecdotes told by language teacher and classmates and asking questions for extra information or clarification, the language learners engage in an authentic communication that is conducive to learning. Telling anecdotes gives language learners the chance to reflect on their own and on others' concerns, perceptions, and values (Wright 2000) and to create a positive social atmosphere within the classroom. The language and conversational skills that are employed to tell a story are different from the skills that are used in inauthentic classroom tasks. Therefore, using anecdotes in language classes has the benefit of modeling daily storytelling skills (Jones 2001). According to Wright (1996, p. 8), the mere introducing and practicing grammatical points or particular lexical areas or functions is a danger for

storytelling, as the stories become a routine activity in the classroom rather than a novel and social learning activity. Therefore, he emphasizes that stories must be used as an authentic tool in language classroom rather than as a tool for explicit teaching of grammatical point or vocabulary items.

Folktales

Folktale is a traditional story that has been passed on by words of mouth before writing systems were developed. They include fables (tales in which animals are main characters and there is an explicit moral lesson), fairy tales (tales with some magical and imaginary elements), myths (tales which are considered sacred), and other sub-types (Taylor, 2000). A wide range of studies have been conducted on folktales from cultural-historical (Cubitt, 2006; Dorson, 1963; Dundes, 2007; Gottschall, Martin, Quish, & Rea, 2004), philological-literary (Babalola & Onanuga, 2012; Grayson, 2002; Hamilton, 2012; Lwin, 2010; Zipes, 2002), sociological and psychological (Fischer, 1963; Haase, 1993; Ragan, 2009; Westland, 1993). However, as Bean (1999) and Taylor (2000) note, in the field of language teaching, folktales seem not to have been properly employed in language classrooms. According to Bean (1999), the characteristic of universality or similarity of the fundamental event sequence in folktales from various cultures makes these tales one of the best tools for language learning. The language of folktales is less complex than the language of academic writing. For example, folktales rarely include phrases like "notwithstanding the fact that" (Taylor, 2000, p. 13).

The simple grammar in folktales makes them particularly suitable for learners at the early stages of language learning as they no need to strongly focus on grammar to understand the content. For more advanced learners the focus of the lesson can be on understanding the organizational elements of texts and on the ways that components of the texts are connected to each other to create cohesion and coherence. Familiar themes of honesty, kindness, jealousy, greed or other moral issues and familiar narrative structures in these tales can also motivate them to listen or read with confidence (Taylor, 2000). Discussing the ways that literary texts can be employed in ESL and EFL classrooms, McKay (2001) notes that there are three major benefits in using literature as content in L2 classrooms: (i) demonstrating for learners the importance of language form to accomplish specific communicative purposes, (ii) providing an ideal basis for integrating different language skills, and (iii) raising students' and teachers' cross-cultural awareness. The final point that must be emphasized about the usefulness of folktales in the classroom is cultural awareness. When folktales of the target language are used in language classroom, the cultural elements of folktales also help to emphasize commonalities between cultures and at the same

time talk about the cross-cultural differences (Taylor, 2000). In other words, folktales are useful for language learners to develop cultural awareness and understand the ways that people of the target language see the world.

Animations

In today's modern educational systems, animations are widely included into computer-based learning in many subject matters, particularly in language learning (Cheng Lin & Fang Tseng, 2012; Kayaoğlu, Dağ Akbaş and Öztürk, 2011; Sundberg, 1998). The results of s range of studies have shown that animations have made a significant contribution to educational system across the world (Balasubramanyam, 2012; McMenemy & Ferguson, 2009; Doyle, 2001; Williamson & Abraham, 1995). Among the various types of support materials that have been employed over the past few decades, multimedia, particularly animation, has had a special place in language classrooms. This type of support materials has been widely used in the process of teaching language to various groups of learners (Tamburini & Paci, 2002). Animations have been integrated in educational systems and language teaching since the early years of 1980s (Ainsworth, 2008). There are several reasons for the enthusiastic inclusion of animations in language classrooms. One of the main reasons is the level of cognitive demand that is needed for a learning task (Tversky, Morrison and Bétrancourt, 2002). It has been demonstrated that students learn better when animation and narration are used together compared to narration alone (Ainsworth, 2008). According to Schnotz and Rasch (2005), there are two ways that animations support cognitive processing: firstly, providing additional information that cannot be displayed in pictures; secondly, helping learners build mental models of situations.

The efficiency of animated pedagogical agents in promoting language learning has encouraged researchers to conduct increasing number of studies in educational settings (for example, Atkinson, 2002; Baylor and Ruy, 2003; Moreno and Mayer, 2000). Pedagogical agents are animated characters that are employed in educational settings to promote learning (Shaw, Johnson and Ganeshan, 1999). These agents are known as talking heads. They have the capability to model speech, facial expressions and gestures that support pedagogical strategies in language classroom (Graesser, Chipman and King, 2008). 3D animated talking head is a special kind of multimedia tools that have been employed in computer-assisted language learning in recent years (Wik, 2011; Wik & Hjalmarsson, 2009; Voce & Hamel, 2001). This efficient tool has effectively been used to improve the quality of pronunciation among L2 learners (Badin, Tarabalka, Elisei, & Bailly, 2010). In modern language classrooms, 3D animated talking heads are being enthusiastically employed for web services or as substitutes for traditional face-to-face instruction. These

talking heads appear as virtual tutors or teachers on learners' computer screens and make a significant contribution to the teaching of various language skills, including reading, pronunciation, conversation and practice (Busa, 2008). In recent years, 3D talking heads have improved the learning process of acquiring a new language (Chen and Massaro, 2011, Massaro, 2006).

Support materials and culture

Foreign language classroom is the place where culture of language learners comes into contact with the culture of people speaking another language. If the gap between the two cultures is large, some barriers might disrupt the process of language learning. Foreign language classroom has been described as a 'cultural island' (Kramsch, 1993; Singhal, 1998; Peck, 1998), 'cultural experience' rather than 'cultural awareness' must be emphasized (Byram, & Morgan, 1994). Kramsch (1987) also believes that culture should be taught as interpersonal process rather than presenting cultural facts. Singhal (1998) emphasizes that teachers should assist language learners in coming to grips with the foreign culture by various tools that are available in the language classroom. The extent to which language learners are receptive to foreign culture is largely dependent on national views toward foreign cultures. However, it must be noted that before coming into contact with the foreign culture, language learners might have some degree of familiarity with that culture through social media, movies, music, stories, etc. This is particularly the case in the modern world that people have easy access to various technological tools. These tools can effectively be employed in language classroom to facilitate the process of cultural acceptance among language learners. The important point is that the cultural differences must be pointed out in a proper way to make learners receptive to such differences. The key here is that cultural differences must not be treated as the superiority of one culture over another one; rather, it must be regarded as viewing the world from two different perspectives. That is, cultural difference must be used as an effective motivational tool to encourage learners to explore other worldviews and to obtain more knowledge about people living in other parts of the world.

Lessard-Clouston (1997) says that in the past, people learned a foreign language to study its literature, and this was the main medium of culture. Reading was the primary source that students used to learn about the culture associated with the target language (Flewelling, 1993). In the 1960s and 1970s, scholars as Hall (1959), Nostrand (1974), Seelye (1974), and Brooks (1975) made a lot of endeavor to base foreign language learning on a universal ground of emotional and physical needs, so that 'the foreign culture would appear less threatening and more accessible to the language learner within the walls of classroom (Kramsch, 1993; Askari, Khoshsima, Khatin-Zadeh, & Banaruee, 2017). In the heyday of the

audiolingual era in language teaching, Brooks (1968) emphasized the importance of culture not only for the study of literature but also for language learning itself.

In language classroom, cross-cultural differences must properly be dealt with. As Singhal (1998) notes, language teacher have to be quite knowledgeable about foreign culture to be able to present all of these aspects accurately to language learners. Over the past five decades, a great of educators (Hammerly, 1982; Seelye, 1984; Damen, 1987) have emphasized the importance of the cultural aspects in foreign language classes and the ways that culture can be incorporated in language classroom (Banaruee, Khatin-Zadeh, & Askari, 2018). The point that needs to be emphasized here is that how support materials can be modified in order to make them fit for language classroom in a culturally different environment. If materials belonging to a foreign culture are going to be used in language classroom, they have to be modified so that they can be accepted by learners. In this regards, teachers have two options; they can modify materials or they can explain cross-cultural differences and prepare language learners to be receptive to those materials. The first option can be effectively used by the support of material designers. The second option is totally dependent on language teacher and his/her ability to explain cross-cultural differences. In fact, an efficient teacher can psychologically prepare his/her student to be receptive to other worldviews.

The aim of this study was to investigate how support materials can be employed in Iranian language classrooms to improve the quality of language education. To achieve this objective, a questionnaire was given to a number of experienced teachers. In this way, it was tried to answer the following research questions:

1. Which support materials are more effective and useful in Iranian language classrooms?
2. How can support materials be modified to make them suitable for teaching foreign languages in Iran?

Methodology
Participants

Participants of this study were 30 Iranian English language teachers. All of these teachers had taught English for at least 10 years. This group of participants consisted of twelve male teachers and 18 female teachers.

Instrument

In this study, a questionnaire that included 14 items was used (See the appendix). In each item, the participants were expected to give their views on using support materials (cartoons, newspaper middles, folk tales, anecdotes, riddles, jokes, proverbs) in Iranian language classrooms. In the first seven items of the questionnaire, the participants had to give their answers on the basis of a Likert scale (Useless, to some extent useful, useful, very useful). In the second seven items, the participants had to give their views about the type of modifications that can be made in support materials.

Procedure

The paper version of the questionnaire was given to the participants. They were asked to answer all items. Those questionnaires which had not been answered completely were excluded from data analysis.

Data analysis

Based on the results obtained from the first seven items, the percentage of usefulness of each supporting material was calculated. These values could show to what extent support materials are useful in Iranian language classrooms. According to the results obtained from the second seven items, those modifications that can be applied to make support materials more useful were identified.

Results

Percentages of usefulness of support materials have been shown in table 1.

Table 1. Percentage of usefulness of support materials

Supporting material	Cartoons	Newspaper middles	Folk tales	Anecdotes	Riddles	Jokes	Proverbs
Percentage of usefulness	%88	%69	%49	%57	%33	%23	%24

These results suggest that cartoons can be the most useful support materials in language classrooms. Moreover, based on the results obtained from the second seven items, the useful modifications that can be made in support materials were identified. Among answers, the following answers had the highest frequency:

1. If cartoons are going to be used in language classrooms, those points that might cause negative reaction in the culture of language learners must be removed from cartoons. In other words, the sensitive issues must be excluded, and the cartoon must be accommodated to the cultural context of language learners.

2. The ideological issues and points of contrast between the two cultures must be removed from all types of support materials.

3. The ambiguous points that are incomprehensible for language learners and very far away from their culture must be excluded from support materials.

Since the most significant results were related to cartoons, the focus of the next section will be on this type of support materials. How support materials can be modified to make them acceptable in the culture of language learners is a question that is going to be answered in the next section.

Discussion

The results obtained from this study suggest that support materials for EFL must be localized according to cultural context of EFL learners. In other words, support materials used in western cultures cannot be employed in Iranian EFL learning context without making some modifications. The difference between Iranian cultural context and western cultures are profound in some respects. These differences cannot and should not be ignored by those people who are involved in the production of support materials for EFL learners. Ignoring these differences would lead to a situation in which these materials are rejected by language learners, teachers, planners, and even larger society. A fundamental question that is raised here is that how support materials should be localized. Should western support materials be rejected out of hand and new materials be produced according to the conditions of Iranian cultural context? If the answer to this question is affirmative, what specific characteristics should these new materials have in order to be suitable for an environment that is pretty different from western environment? If the answer to

the question is negative, what modifications must be applied in order to make western support materials suitable for Iranian EFL learning context? These are important questions for which we have to find convincing answers. Otherwise, we will not be able to design suitable supporting EFL materials for an environment that is different from western environment in terms of social, ideological, economical, historical, and religious aspects. Perhaps the first point that comes to mind is that the opposite ideological stances between the two cultures must not be included in the designing of support materials. If the opposite ideological views or common beliefs between the two sides are not met in material design, a number of obstacles might disrupt the programs of language education. Negative attitudes toward target language, a sense of rejection, and demotivation are the natural and unavoidable consequences of such a situation. If the EFL learner is going to be receptive to target language, s/he has to receive input from a channel that is compatible with his/her ideological perspective and beliefs.

Because of several reasons, the use of cartoons as support materials should be done by taking into account a set of unavoidable observations. Therefore, the effective employment of cartoons as supporting EFL materials is dependent on taking a set of precautions. Among these precautions, those related to ideological and religious beliefs cannot be denied in the cultural and religious context of Iranian society. If the western EFL materials are going to be employed in Iranian EFL context, various characteristics of the learners such as age, sex, social level, educational level, political views, and ideological perspectives must seriously be taken into account. A cartoon that is an effective tool for a particular group of EFL male learners in a metropolitan might not be very useful in a small town with a conservative population. A cartoon that is an effective and acceptable tool for EFL learners in the first cultural context might be rejected in the second environment. While the first group could have a positive view toward such a material and be receptive to it, the second group might have a negative view toward it and reject it as unacceptable tool for language learning. The programs for designing support materials must be sensitive to characteristics of particular groups of learners within particular ideological environments in particular sociocultural contexts. When we talk about ideological perspectives embedded within a sociocultural milieu, in fact, we are referring to two undeniable levels of every society. Being ignorant of these two levels of worldview would lead to the failure of any educational program, especially EFL educational programs that are highly sensitive to cross-cultural and cross-ideological differences. Furthermore, the inclusion of shared views and common ideological beliefs of the two cultures within language teaching programs could lead to a positive feeling of mutual understanding between people belonging to the two cultures. In language teaching programs, the deep similarities or hardly-observable common features of the two cultures and their shared ideological stances must be brought to the consciousness of EFL

learners. On the other hand, cross-cultural and cross-ideological differences must be removed or at least deemphasized.

Using cartoon as a motivating tool can encourage EFL learners' participation in classroom activities. Cartoon can function as a supplementary material to create a vibrant and lively atmosphere among learners. Because of its stimulating nature, cartoons can be an excellent starting point for a discussion in the classroom. It can serve as a spark for changing the monotonous atmosphere that might be formed in the classroom. In many cases, cartoons can flexibly be interpreted, because they are open to be viewed from many perspectives. Since the understanding of one viewer might be different from the understanding of another viewer, cartoons are encouraging and enhance a sense of self-expression among language learners. The growth of a sense of self-expression is critically important for every language learner. This is particularly the case for speaking and writing although its importance for receptive-oriented skills of reading and listening cannot be totally rejected. In fact, cartoons can be highly useful as a tool for pre-listening activities.

Discussing several interesting examples, Jadhav (2011) shows how a single cartoon can effectively be used as the subject for a discussion in the classroom. One of these examples has been shown in figure 1. He presents a number of questions that can be asked and answered on the basis of this cartoon.

Figure 1. *O.K., have your way, But I bet the director doesn't mean this when he wants me to be suspended till the inquiry is over!* (Jadhav, 2011)

Some of these questions are as following:

1. How many people are there in the picture?

2. Who are the men wearing turbans? What are they doing?

3. Who is the man wearing spectacle?

4. What does he have in his hand? What paper do you think it is?

5. Can you guess what must have happened?

6. Are they hanging the man?

7. Which word is responsible for the humor in the cartoon?

8. What does the speaker mean by "O.K. Have your way"?

In the above case, the cartoon cognitively and psychologically involves language learners. It is cognitively involving because the double meanings of the word 'suspend' has led to such a funny situation; it is psychologically involving because it shows a funny situation that has been caused by the non-intended meaning of a word. Among the suggested questions, the second question can be a proper one for language classrooms in countries such as India. However, it cannot be a good item in many other countries, because wearing traditional clothes is a matter of culture. Such questions cannot be properly understood by people who are living in other cultural context. If such a material is going to be used in language classes of other countries, some modifications must be made in it. It is better to remove the culturally-based elements of the cartoons in order to avoid serious ambiguity in the discussions. According to Woolard (1999), modifying a cartoon is a way of appreciating the creativity of the cartoonist (1999) rather than changing the content or the message that is going to be communicated.

Another point that cannot be overlooked here is the personality of language learners, and the ways that personality of language learners interacts with the cultural context of language learning. The results of a number of studies (for example, Zare Behtash, Bakhshizadeh, Khatin-Zadeh, & Banaruee, 2017; Yazdani Fazlabadi & Khatin-Zadeh, 2016) have indicated that personality trait could be a significant factor in the process of language learning. Therefore, we cannot ignore this factor in any discussion about cultural effects of support materials. Because of their personality types, some learners might be more comfortable to learn a foreign language through a specific type of support materials. Therefore, syllabus designers should take this into account when they prepare support materials for language courses.

The final point that needs to be emphasized here is the shared points between cultures of Eastern countries such as Iran and India. There is no doubt that these two countries share a lot of cultural and ideological commonalties. It is great opportunity for language teachers to borrow language teaching materials from each other, even if these materials are intended to teach English rather than Persian or Hindi. Ramanujan (1994) have collected a number of Indian folktales. This collection can be a valuable source in language classes in those Eastern countries that are close to India in terms of culture and social context. This is particularly the case in countries such as Iran. It is hoped that this opportunity is acknowledged by those people who are involved in language teaching programs, particularly high-level curriculum designers and macro-planners.

Summary

This study investigated the role of support materials among Iranian EFL learners. Obtained results indicated that borrowed support materials must be modified according to the ideological and sociocultural context of Iran. Sensitive issues and points of contrast between Iranian culture and those of foreign cultures must be excluded from those support materials that are going to be used in language classrooms in Iran. Therefore, any plan for using support materials in language classroom must be sensitive to socio-cultural, ideological and religious issues. Moreover, ambiguous points that are very far away from Iranian culture and are incomprehensible for Iranian L2 learners must not be included in such materials. However, shared socio-cultural and ideological perspectives must be emphasized in language classroom. The final point that must not be overlooked here is that this study focused on one group of support materials, particularly cartoons. The role of other support materials and the type of needed modifications can be the subject of future studies. This is particularly the case with advanced and technological materials that appear in the markets almost every day.

References

Abraham, A. (1987). 'Foreword'. In Mandoo (1987), *Cartoons for Peace*. Ahmedabad: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

Ainsworth, S. (2008). How do animations influence learning? In *Current perspectives on cognition, learning and instruction*: *Recent innovations in educational technology that facilitate student learning*, eds. D. Robinson and G. Schraw, 37–67. Information Age Publishing.

Askari, A., Khoshsima, H., Khatin-Zadeh, O., & Banaruee, H. (2017). Learners' factors in L2 reading comprehension. *Global Journal of Educational Studies, 3*, 70-82. 10.5296/gjes.v3i2.11797.

Atkinson, R. K. (2002). Optimizing learning from examples using animated pedagogical agents. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 94,* 416–427.

Babalola, E. T. & Onanuga, P. A. (2012). Atrophization of minority languages: Indigenous folktales to the rescue. *International Journal of Linguistics*, *4(1),* 158-173.

Badin, P., Y. Tarabalka, F. Elisei and G. Bailly. (2010). Can you 'read' tongue movements? Evaluation of the contribution of tongue display to speech understanding. *Speech communication*, *52,* 493–503.

Balasubramanyam, V. (2012). Animations in medical education. *Medical Journal of Dr. D.Y. Patil University, 5(1),* 22.

Banaruee, H., Khatin-Zadeh, O., & Askari, A. (2018). *Error Correction: To me or not to me*. Lambert Academic Publishing.

Bar, C., East, K. A., & Thomas, R. L. (2007). Across cultures: A guide to multicultural literature for children. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

Baylor, A. & . Ryu, J. (2003). Does the presence of image and animation enhance pedagogical agent persona? *Journal of Educational Computing Research, 28(4),* 373–395.

Bean, M. (1999). The role of traditional stories in language teaching and learning. In M. R. MacDonald (Ed.), *Traditional storytelling today: An international sourcebook* (pp.548-551). London: Fitzroy Dearborn.

Biggs, J. (1999). *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*. Buckingham: SRHE and OU Press.

Brooks, N. (1968). Teaching culture in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, *1*, 204-217.

Brooks, N. (1975). The analysis of foreign and familiar cultures. In Lafayette, R. (ed.). The Culture Revolution in Foreign Language Teaching. Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Company.

Busa, M. G. (2008). New perspectives in teaching pronunciation. In *Didactas to ecolingua: An ongoing research project on translation and corpus linguistics,* ed. A. Baldry, 165–182. Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste.

Byram, M., Morgan, C. and Colleagues. (1994). *Teaching and Learning Language and Culture*. Great Britain: WBC.

Chen, T. H. and D. W. Massaro. (2011). Evaluation of synthetic and natural Mandarin visual speech: Initial consonants, single vowels, and syllables. *Speech communication, 53,* 955–972.

Cheng Lin, C. & Y. Fang Tseng. (2012). Videos and animations for vocabulary learning: A study on difficult words. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology, 11(4),* 346–355.

Chiaro, D. (1992). *The language of jokes: analyzing verbal play*. London and New York: Routledge, Interface Series, 1996.

Cubitt, C. (2006). Folklore and historiography: Oral stories and the writing of Anglo-Saxon history. In E. M. Tyler, & R. Balzaretti (Eds.), *Narrative and history in the Early Medieval West* (pp.189-224). Turnhout: Brepols Publishers.

Damen, L. (1987). *Culture Learning: The Fifth Dimension in the Language Classroom*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Davis, K. L., Brown, B. G., Liedel-Rice, A., & Soeder, P. (2005). Experiencing diversity through children's multicultural literature. Kappa Delta Pi Record, 41(4), 176–179.

Dorson, R. M. (1963). Current folklore theories. *Current Anthropology*, *4(1),* 93-112.

Doyle, A. (2001). Web animation: Learning in motion. *Tech & Learning, 22(2),* 30–42.

Dundes, A. (2007). Worldview in folk narrative. In S. J. Bronner (Ed.), *The meaning of folklore: The analytical essays of Alan Dunde*s (pp.193-195). Logan: Utah State University Press.

Fischer, J. L. (1963). The sociopsychological analysis of folktales. *Current Anthropology, 4*(3), 235-295.

Fleisch, B., Taylor, N., Herholdt, R. & Sapire, I. (2011). Evaluation of Back to Basics Mathematics workbooks: A Randomised Control Trial of Primary Maths Research Project. *South African Journal of Education, 31 (4)*, 488 – 504.

Flewelling, J. (1993). Teaching culture in the '90s: Implementing the National Core French Study syllabus, *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *49(1),* 338-344.

Giunta, J. (2010). Using Cartoons as a Teaching Tool for Online Learning, (Online), (http://www.suite101.com/content/using-cartoons-as a teaching-tool)

Gottschall, J., Martin, J., Quish, H., & Rea, J. (2004). Sex differences in mate choice criteria are reflected in folktales from around the world and in historical European literature. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, *25*(2), 102-112.

Graesser, A. C., Chipman, P., & King, B. G. (2008). Computer-mediated technologies. In *Handbook of research on educational communications and technology*, 3rd ed., eds. J. M. Spector, M. D. Merrill, J. J. G. van Merriënboer and M. Driscoll, 211–224. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Grayson, J. H. (2002). The Hungbu and Nolbu tale type: A Korean double contrastive narrative structure. *Folklore, 113*(1), 51- 69.

Haase, D. (1993). Response and responsibility in reading Grimms' fairy tales. *Haase, Reception*, 230-249.
Hall, E. T. (1959). *The Silent Language*. New York: Anchor Books.
Hamilton, M. (2012). *Kentucky folktales: Revealing stories, truths, and outright Lies*: Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.

Hammerly, H. (1982). Synthesis in language teaching. Blaine, WA: Second Language Publications.

Hutchinson, T., & Torres, E. (1994).The Textbook as Agent of Change. Oxford University Press. www.eltj.oxford journals.org.

Jadhav, B. S. (2011). *Teaching English: The Use of Support Materials*. Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan.

Jones, R. (2001). A consciousness-raising approach to the teaching of conversational storytelling skills. *ELT Journal, 55(2),* 155-163.

Kayaoğlu, M. N., R. Dağ Akbaş & Z. Öztürk. (2011). A small scale experimental study: Using animations to learn vocabulary. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology, 10(2),* 24–30.

Knowles, E., & Smith, M. (2007). Understanding diversity through novels and picture books. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

Kramsch, C. (1987). *Socialization and Literacy in a Foreign Language: Learning through Interaction*. Theory into Practice, 26/4. Columbus: The Ohio State University.

Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lessard-Clouston, M. (1997). Towards an Understanding of Culture in L2/FL Education. In Ronko, K.G. *Studies in English*, 25, 131-150 Japan: Kwansei Gakuin University Press.

Lowery, R. M., & Sabis-Burns, D. (2007). From borders to bridges: Making cross-cultural connections through multicultural literature. *Multicultural Education*, *14(4),* 50–54.

Lwin, S. M. (2010). *Narrative structures in Burmese folk tales*. Amherst, NY: Cambria Press.

Moreno, R. & Mayer, R. E. (2000). Engaging students in active learning: The case for personalized multimedia messages. *Journal of Educational Psychology and Technology, 92,* 724–733.

Massaro, D. W. (2006). Embodied agents in language learning for children with language challenges. In *Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Computers Helping People with Special*

Needs, ICCHP 2006, eds. K. Miesenberger, J. Klaus, W. Zagler and A. Karshmer, 809–816. Berlin: Springer.

McKay, S. L. (2001). Literature as content for ESL/EFL. In M. Celce-Murica (Ed.), *Teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language* (pp.319-332). New York, NY: Heinle and Heinle.

McMenemy, K. and S. Ferguson. (2009). Enhancing the teaching of professional practice and key skills in engineering through the use of computer animation. *International Journal of Electrical Engineering Education, 46(2),* 164–174.

Mieder, Wolfgang. (2004). *Proverbs - A Handbook*. Westport, CT; Greenwood Press.

Murthi, R. K. (2000). *How to solve crossword puzzles*. Delhi: Pustak Mahal.

Nostrand, H. L. (1974). Empathy for a second culture: Motivations and techniques. In Jarvis, G. A. (ed.). Responding to New Realities. *ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series*, vol. 5. Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook.

Oliveri, D. (2007). Cartoon Drawing in the Classroom: Ways to use Cartoon in Teaching, (Online), (http://www.morguefile.com-tarr101).

Peck, D. (1998). *Teaching Culture: Beyond Language*. Yale: New Haven Teachers Institute.

Possenti, S. (2001). *Os humores na língua*. Campinas: Mercado de Letras.

Ragan, K. (2009). What happened to the heroines in folktales?: An analysis by gender of a multicultural sample of published folktales collected from storytellers. *Marvels & Tales*, *23*(2), 227-247.

Ramanujan, A. k. (1994). *Folktales From India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India (P) Ltd.

Ramsden, P. (1992). *Learning to Teach in Higher Education.* New York: Routledge.

Schnotz, W. and T. Rasch. (2005). Enabling, facilitating and inhibiting effects of animations in multimedia learning: Why reduction of cognitive load can have negative results on learning. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 53(3),* 47–58.

Seelye, H. (1984). *Teaching Culture: Strategies for inter-cultural Communication*. Revised edition. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Shaw, E., Johnson, W. L., & Ganeshan, R. (1999). Pedagogical agents on the web. *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Autonomous Agents*, *Seattle, WA.* http://www.isi.edu/isd/ADE/papers/agents99/agents99.htm.

Singhal, M. (1998). Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom. *Thai TESOL Bulletin,* Vol. 11 No. 1, February 1998.

Sundberg P. A. (1998). Animation in CALL: Learning to think in the fourth dimension. Paper presented at CALICO '98 Symposium San Diego, California.

Tamburini, F. & S. Paci. (2002). Web based language learning: Authoring and assessment technologies. International Conference on Information and Communication Technology in Education, Badajoz, Spain.

Taylor, E. K. (2000). *Using folktales*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tversky, B., J. B. Morrison and M. Bétrancourt. (2002). Animation: Can it facilitate? *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies, 57(4),* 247–262.

Van Wyk, M. M. (2011). The use of cartoons as a teaching tool to enhance student learning in economics education. *Journal of Social Sciences*, *26(2),* 117-130.

Vega, G. M. (1989). *Humor Competence*: *the Fifth Component*. M.A thesis, Purdue University, Purdue, Indiana.

performance on "listening for gist" and "minimal pairs ". *International Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences, 7(5),* 123-126. 10.5923/j.ijpbs.20170705.01.

Zhao, Y. (1988).The information-conveying aspect of jokes. *International Journal of Humor Research, 1(3),* 279-298.

Ziegler, J. (1998). Use of humor in medical teaching. *Medical Teacher,* 20(4): 341-348.

Zipes, J. (2002). *Breaking the magic spell: Radical theories of folk and fairy tales.* Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.

Ziv, A. (1979). The teacher's sense of humour and the atmosphere in the classroom. *School Psychology International, 1(2),* 21-23.

Appendix

1. To what extent can cartoons be useful in language classrooms in Iran?

Useless ○   To some extent useful ○   Useful ○   Very useful ○

2. To what extent can newspaper middles be useful in language classrooms in Iran?

Useless ○   To some extent useful ○   Useful ○   Very useful ○

3. To what extent can folktales be useful in language classrooms in Iran?

Useless ○   To some extent useful ○   Useful ○   Very useful ○

4. To what extent can anecdotes be useful in language classrooms in Iran?

Useless ○   To some extent useful ○   Useful ○   Very useful ○

5. To what extent can riddles be useful in language classrooms in Iran?

Useless ○   To some extent useful ○   Useful ○   Very useful ○

6. To what extent can jokes be useful in language classrooms in Iran?

Useless ◯   To some extent useful ◯   Useful ◯   Very useful ◯

7. To what extent can proverbs be useful in language classrooms in Iran?

Useless ◯   To some extent useful ◯   Useful ◯   Very useful ◯

8. What modifications can be made in cartoons to make them more effective in language classrooms in Iran?

9. What modifications can be made in newspaper middles to make them more effective in language classrooms in Iran?

10. What modifications can be made in folktales to make them more effective in language classrooms in Iran?

11. What modifications can be made in anecdotes to make them more effective in language classrooms in Iran?

12. What modifications can be made in riddles to make them more effective in language classrooms in Iran?

13. What modifications can be made in jokes to make them more effective in language classrooms in Iran?

14. What modifications can be made in proverbs to make them more effective in language classrooms in Iran?