



The Effect of Different Presentation Methods on EFL Learners' Acquisition of Word Knowledge

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Abstract

Vocabulary is critical in second language acquisition, but there is no consensus as to how to present vocabulary in a way that facilitates learning in class. This research compared the effect of word-list presentation and contextual presentation on Chinese EFL learners' acquisition of word knowledge. 69 participants were divided into two groups, each consisting of students with upper, intermediate and lower proficiency levels. Word-list presentation and contextual presentation were given to two groups respectively. Two post-tests (immediate and delayed) were administered after the experiment, and the data collected were analyzed via SPSS 16. The results showed that 1) compared with contextual presentation, word-list presentation has significant advantage in productive knowledge of orthography. And this advantage is evident at three proficiency levels. However, there is no significant difference in other types of word knowledge. 2) The advantage word-list presentation has on orthographic knowledge was not the same among different proficiency levels. The intermediate subgroup performed the best, followed by the lower proficiency group while the advantage of word-list presentation is not conspicuous in the upper level group.

Keywords: Vocabulary presentation; Word knowledge; EFL learners.

1. Introduction

Words are crucial for successful language learning (McCarthy, 1990; Wilkins, 1972). And the importance of words has attracted the attention of scholars both at home and abroad. The studies mainly centered around incidental acquisition and deliberate teaching---ways to improve vocabulary teaching efficiency in classroom. It is commonly accepted that though incidental learning is one source of vocabulary acquisition, deliberate learning is indispensable to vocabulary learning. Thus, scholars try to find the best interface between the quantity, frequency and order of the vocabulary input in the classroom and the best retention of second language vocabulary. As for deliberate learning, the research can be summarized into two major categories. First, scholars investigated the effect of various teaching methods on vocabulary acquisition (Irina, 2010; Sara and Zohreh, 2011; Shintani, 2012; Webb, 2007; Yuka, 2014). Secondly, the effect of vocabulary knowledge on different language skills or the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language skills (esp. reading comprehension) were explored (Hossein, 2004; Irina, 2010; Miao and John, 2014; 王 瑛, 2013).

Although previous studies examined the gains of vocabulary knowledge, they didn't consider the conditions of participants. The learners at different learning stages will perform differently under the same learning condition. In addition, the results concerning the effect of word-list presentation and contextual presentation on the acquisition of word knowledge were inconsistent. So whether contextual presentation is better than word-list presentation, whether students with different language levels have different performance under different vocabulary presentation models remain questionable. The main purpose of this research is to reveal the acquisition of different type of vocabulary knowledge components (spoken and written form, meaning and form, grammatical functions) and the performance of different learners under the word-list presentation and contextual presentation.

Thus, this study aims to investigate the effect of two vocabulary presentation methods (word-list presentation and contextual presentation) on EFL learners' acquisition of word knowledge (including correct spelling, word meaning and grammar) and the differences in vocabulary acquisition between students with different English proficiency levels.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of Word Knowledge

According to Nation (1990), there are three dimensions with nine components under word knowledge which consists of form (spoken form, written, and word parts), meaning (form and meaning, concept and referents, and associations), and use (grammatical functions, collocations, and constraints on use). For each component, there is a distinction between receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. Receptive vocabulary knowledge is related to the skills of listening and reading (known as receptive skills) and the ability to retrieve the meaning of input. Productive vocabulary knowledge is related to the skills of speaking and writing (known as productive skills) and the ability to retrieve and produce the meaning by means of speech or writing.

Thus, to know a word means to know its 1) form (pronunciation and spelling); 2) word structure (root, prefix, suffix, derivation and inflexions); 3) grammatical form in phrases or sentences; 4) meaning (conceptual meaning,

pragmatic meaning and affective meaning); 5) coordinates (synonyms, antonyms and superordinates); 6) collocation (Laufer, 2002).

2.1.1. Relevant Studies on Word Knowledge

In the recent two decades, awareness of depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge is increasing since (Nation, 1990;2001) put forward the framework of word knowledge. The research focuses on the effect of various teaching methods on vocabulary acquisition and the relationship between word knowledge (depth and breadth of vocabulary) and language skills. In the second category, the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension ability takes the most part (赵蔚, 陈永捷, 2014).

2.1.2. The Effect of Various Teaching Methods or Strategies on Word Knowledge

The research was first on the acquisition of vocabulary knowledge under a certain condition or strategy (Myong, 2012; Webb, 2007; Wilcox and Almitra, 2013; Yuka, 2014). Webb (2007), studied the effect of repetition on word knowledge. The research investigated the acquisition of both receptive and productive knowledge, including the knowledge of orthography, association, grammatical functions, syntax, meaning and form, with the number of repetitions controlled. Results show that the more repetition, the greater the vocabulary knowledge gained. And every repetition can bring gains at least in one aspect of knowledge. He argues that to develop full knowledge of a word, more than ten repetitions may be needed.

Yuka (2014), investigated the multidimensional vocabulary acquisition through deliberate vocabulary list learning. This research not only provides the quantitative analysis of the change in vocabulary knowledge through learning, but also supplements analysis with qualitative data collected via semi-structured interview, which revealed the learning processes and strategies. Vocabulary Levels Test and Productive Vocabulary Levels Test were used to measure participants' word knowledge growth, and a semi-structured interview to reveal participants' learning strategies. The results show deliberate vocabulary list learning brings gains both in receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge. However, the size of participants is too small, with only 22 female students from one class, and no control groups were involved. Compared with Webb's research, the tests in Yamamoto's research were less convincing.

2.1.3. The Link Between Word Knowledge and Language Skills

Miao and John (2014), explored the relationship between breadth and depth of word knowledge and the effect of vocabulary breadth and depth on English reading. They controlled the L1 proficiency and L2 word reading which most of the researches ignored. The measurements were well designed compared with other research related to breadth and depth of vocabulary. Three measures (word definition, morphological awareness, and multiple-meaning tests) were given to students to obtain a more comprehensive assessment of vocabulary depth. They found that the breadth and depth of vocabulary were correlated and they both contributed to word reading, while breadth of vocabulary had a stronger effect than depth of vocabulary. And vocabulary breadth contributed to multiple-choice which requires general understanding of the text, while vocabulary depth contributed to summary writing which requires deeper text processing.

Previous research testified that word knowledge has great effect on language skills. But the research only examined the relationship between word knowledge and language skills, without considering the gains of word knowledge. Without growth in word knowledge, the language proficiency would not be improved.

2.2. Vocabulary Presentation

2.2.1. Vocabulary Presentation Models

Researchers hold different opinions on vocabulary presentation and its contents. Gairns and Redman (1986), provided three types of vocabulary presentation: direct observation (cards, pictures, gestures etc.), oral explanation (mainly used to explain the situations in which words are used), and using dictionaries (including bilingual dictionary, monolingual dictionary, and encyclopedia etc.). Penny (2000), employed the following methods to present new words: concise definition (as in a dictionary); detailed description (of appearance, qualities); examples (hyponyms); illustration (picture, object); demonstration (acting, mime); context (story or sentence in which the item occurs); synonyms; opposite(s) (antonyms); translation; associated ideas, collocations. Recommended six ways to present words: 1) use examples to explain word meaning; 2) ask students to say the word meaning; 3) use related words to bring out the word meaning, such as synonyms or antonyms; 4) test students' understanding about words by some means; 5) use the words in daily life; 6) predict confusions and misunderstandings students will encounter. He 何家宁 (1998) put forward three kinds of presentations: word-list, semantic field and contextual presentation. The word-list presentation includes: English words, corresponding pronunciation and Chinese meaning (equivalents, synonyms or antonyms). Semantic field presentation is to classify words into certain semantic fields, such as the animal field. Contextual presentation means the words are contained in the discourse.

2.2.2. Research on Word-List Presentation Models

Made comparison of the advantages and disadvantages between word-list presentation and semantic field presentation. And he holds that semantic field is much better than word-list presentation. Find the presentation of pictures is helpful to the word learning by showing pictures to participants. The research shows that the word-list presentation didn't help learners acquire words easily. However, other research shows that the word-list presentation

is helpful for learners. For example, [File and Adams \(2010\)](#) believe the presentation of word-list is an efficient way for learners to learn many words in a short time, and the words learned can get a long-term retention. They found that teaching with isolated words is more efficient. [Nation \(1990\)](#), holds the view that it's acceptable to use isolated word-list presentation in the beginning of word learning, but at later stages other presentation methods should be used for further learning.

2.2.3. Research on Contextual Presentation Models

Contextual input such as “find the meaning through context”, “analyze affix and root”, “request teachers to list sentences with new words” etc. promotes vocabulary acquisition. Made a comparison between the vocabulary presentations with a context and the ones without. And the study shows the presentation with context is better than that without context. [Patrick and Gabriela \(2011\)](#), believed that the context-related presentation will reduce the adverse effect caused by semantic-related presentation. [Myong \(2012\)](#), found in vocabulary learning, students prefer second language glosses while reading second language materials than non-gloss condition. [Lo-li and Chih-Cheng \(2014\)](#), find that it's beneficial in the reading comprehension to gloss the vocabulary.. Their research showed that although contextual presentation is helpful at guessing words, but unprofitable in long-term memory. [File and Adams \(2010\)](#), also found that isolated vocabulary teaching is more efficient than vocabulary teaching in the context. And both isolated vocabulary teaching and teaching in the context are better in vocabulary acquisition and retention than incidental exposure alone.

Therefore, scholars have inconsistent results both on word-list presentation and contextual presentation. So whether contextual presentation is better than word-list presentation, whether students with different language levels have different performance under different vocabulary presentation remain unsettled.

This research aims to find out the answers in the context of a Chinese university. In the present study, the word-list presentation model was adopted from [何家宁 \(1998\)](#) description of word-list presentation: English words, corresponding pronunciations, and Chinese meaning presented in a list. The contextual presentation model was also adopted from [何家宁 \(1998\)](#) description: words are presented in a complete discourse. And learners learn the target words while understanding the main idea of the whole passage.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Questions

There are two questions to be addressed in the research.

1. *Is there any significant difference between the effect of word-list presentation and that of contextual presentation on word knowledge (including spelling, word meaning, grammar and collocation)?*
2. *Is there any significant difference between the effect of word-list presentation and that of contextual presentation on participants with different English proficiency levels?*

3.2. Research Participants

The participants are 69 English sophomores from a normal university in Sichuan province. They are randomly assigned into two groups. To ensure the validity of the experiment, pre-tests of their English proficiency and vocabulary size were administered before the experiment. According to their proficiency scores, each group consists of students with upper, intermediate and lower English levels.

3.3 Research Instruments

3.3.1 Reading Material and Target Words

The reading material used for contextual presentation model is *How to Write a Resume* selected from *New Horizon English Course* (2015). The reading passage was given to a class of English sophomores to mark the words that are new to them. Ten words were chosen from the marked ones according to their frequency as the target words, which will be used both in word-list presentation and contextual presentation. The reading text and the target words are listed in Appendix.

3.3.2 Post-Tests of Word Knowledge

The two post-tests were designed based on [Webb \(2007\)](#), testing the receptive and productive knowledge of the words, including orthographic form, meaning and form, grammatical functions, syntax and association. There are in total five tests in this research.

Test 1: Productive word knowledge of orthography

In this test, the learners heard each target word pronounce twice, and then had 10 seconds to write down the word heard. If there were any spelling mistakes, the answers were marked incorrect. This was because the learners were given the phonological forms of the target words as a cue to recall. Since the participants had learned the rules of spelling, phonological cues would be enough to at least lead them to write a close approximation of the target words. If the similar spellings were marked correct, it would not be determined whether it was due to phonological prompt.

Test 2: Receptive word knowledge of orthography

A multiple-choice format was used with the correct spelling of a target word among three distracters in the second test. The three distracters were created to resemble the target words both phonetically and orthographically.

Participants were required to choose the correct spelling of the target words. The productive tests need to be completed before receptive tests in order to avoid the learning effect.

Test 3: Receptive knowledge of meaning and form

In the third test, receptive knowledge of meaning and form was tested by using a translation test. The target words were listed and presented with a blank beside each item. The direct translation of the target words into Chinese or their frequent synonyms was scored as correct. Contextual cues were not provided because participants could gain knowledge of syntax and grammatical functions which would help them in the test.

Test 4: Productive knowledge of grammatical functions

In this test, participants were asked to write a sentence with the target word. The sentences were scored as correct if the target word was written in context with grammatical accuracy. For example, the target word *assist* would be scored as correct for *Do you need anyone to assist you* or *My family assisted me with the housework* and incorrect for *This is an assist tool*. Although in the last sentence, the meaning of the target word “assist” was clearly showed, the points should be given to the grammatical accuracy. This test was scored by two scorers to ensure inter-rater reliability.

Test 5: Productive knowledge of syntax and association

In this test, participants were asked to write at least two words. One word had a syntagmatic relationship with each target word, i.e. the words often co-occur in context with the target word. For example, *movement* and *action* were scored correct for the target word *appropriate*. Another word had a paradigmatic association with the target word. Coordinates (antonym), superordinates, subordinates, and synonyms were scored as correct. The following are some examples for the word *applicant*: proposer (coordinate), candidate (synonym), human (superordinate), job (subordinate). The words participants listed were scored 0.5 point for syntagmatic relation and 0.5 point for association.

3.3.3. Delayed Post-Test

The delayed post-test was conducted one week after the post-test with the purpose of measuring the retention of word knowledge. To avoid the contribution made by post-test, the delayed post-test was redesigned based on the word knowledge types tested in the post-test. The first two tests are the same as the post-test. The third test didn't ask participants to write sentences, but to choose the grammatical sentences written with the item. For example: the target word *appropriate*

- A. *This is an appropriate explanation.*
- B. *The appropriate is good for me.*
- C. *She appropriates the book.*

3.4. Research Procedures

The participants were divided into Group A (word-list presentation) and Group B (contextual presentation), and the research was conducted in their regular class. In Group A the target words were presented in a word-list. Each word was given the orthographic form, phonetic transcription, part of speech and Chinese meaning. Researcher led participants to study these words one by one, and help them to find the associations and frequently-used phrase of each word. After a 5-minute review, researcher continued the normal teaching. 30mins later, the post-tests were administered to the participants. In Group B, the reading material was distributed to the participants who were asked to go through the material quickly, and after reading, a true or false question should be answered. This true or false question was to ensure the participants have an overall understanding of the reading material. The target words were highlighted in the material, the part of speech, pronunciation and Chinese equivalents were also given in the material. The researcher led participants to read and spell these words. Then as in Group A, the researcher continued the normal teaching. 30mins later, the same uninformed post-tests were given to Group B.

A week later, the two groups were given the delayed post-test without telling them in advance. Both post-tests and delayed post-tests were given enough time for participants to complete all the questions. Participants were told the test results would be considered into their final assessment.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results of the Two Presentation Methods

This research adopted the immediate post-test and the delayed post-test. The immediate post-tests aimed to find the difference of the effect between two kinds of presentations on the different aspect of vocabulary knowledge. The delayed post-test mainly aimed to find out whether there is difference in retention.

4.1.1. Descriptive Statistics of Two Presentation Models

As shown in Table 1, participants performed quite differently in different types of vocabulary knowledge. They both performed well on the receptive knowledge of orthography and receptive knowledge of meaning and form. And they both performed poorly on the productive knowledge of grammatical functions and productive knowledge of syntax and associations. Group A did better on the productive and receptive knowledge of orthography and productive knowledge of syntax & associations in immediate post-tests. Group A outperformed Group B in all delayed post-tests. The results also showed that participants in both word-list presentation and contextual presentation groups perform poorly in the grammatical functions and syntax and associations, but strong in recognizing word forms.

Table-1. Performance of word-list presentation (Group A) and contextual presentation (Group B)

	Test1 mean	Test 2 mean	Test 3 mean	Test 4 mean	Test 5 mean	DT 1 mean	DT 2 mean	DT3 mean
Group A	8.26	9.47	8.29	5.53	5.89	8.40	9.09	7.08
Group B	5.10	9.32	8.48	5.71	4.74	6.55	8.32	6.65

Test 1: Productive knowledge of orthography; Test 2: Receptive knowledge of orthography; Test 3: Receptive knowledge of meaning & form; Test; 4: Productive knowledge of grammatical functions; Test 5: Productive knowledge of syntax & associations DT 1: delayed test of receptive knowledge of orthography; DT 2: delayed test of receptive knowledge of word meaning; DT 3: delayed test of receptive knowledge of syntax.

4.1.2. Comparison of the Results of Immediate Post-Tests between Two Groups

In the immediate post-test, the independent sample t-tests of orthography, meaning and form, grammatical functions, and syntax and associations were shown in Table 2. In Test 1, there was significant difference between two groups ($p = .000$). That is to say, in the immediate post-test, learners did better under the word-list presentation in the productive knowledge of orthography. And there were no significant difference in other kinds of vocabulary knowledge between two presentation models.

Table-2. Independent Sample t-tests of the immediate post-tests of Group A and B

Test	Group	MEAN	SD	t	Sig.(P)
Test 1	A	8.26	2.214	5.225	.000
	B	5.10	2.821		
Test 2	A	9.47	.862	.659	.505
	B	9.32	1.013		
Test 3	A	8.29	2.324	-.360	.720
	B	8.48	2.111		
Test 4	A	5.53	2.607	-.286	.776
	B	5.71	2.698		
Test 5	A	5.89	2.628	1.839	.070
	B	4.74	2.543		

4.1.3. Results of two Presentation Models in Delayed Post-Test

The results of delayed post-test were shown in Table 3, in DT 1, there is significant difference between the two groups in receptive knowledge of orthography ($p = .000$). In DT 2 and DT3, there is no significant difference between the two groups in the delayed test of meaning and syntax. Table 3 showed that word-list presentation was favorable on receptive knowledge of orthography, and it has slight advantage on receptive knowledge of meaning over contextual presentation.

Table-3. Independent Sample t-tests of delayed post-tests

Type of test	Group	Mean	SD	t	Sig.(P)
DT 1	A	8.40	.946	4.215	.000
	B	6.55	2.278		
DT 2	A	9.09	.951	2.066	.043
	B	8.32	1.939		
DT 3	A	7.08	1.610	1.010	.316
	B	6.65	1.942		

4.2. Results of the Effect on Participants with Different English Proficiency Levels

Participants were divided into upper, intermediate and lower proficiency levels. The participants having the same proficiency level in two groups were compared to reveal their differences within and between the groups.

4.2.1. The Performance of Participants with Upper Proficiency Level

In Table 4, the effect on participants with upper proficiency level in group A was significantly higher than those in group B in the productive knowledge of orthography. The mean level in test 1 of group A (8.50) is higher than that of group B (5.60), and there is statistical significance ($p = 0.019 < 0.05$). There is no statistical significance in other tests ($p > 0.05$). This means the participants with upper proficiency level did well under word-list presentation only on productive knowledge of orthography. There was no significant difference between two presentations on other types of word knowledge.

Table-4. The performance of participants with upper proficiency level in two groups

Types of test	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.(P)
Test 1	A	10	8.50	2.068	2.589	.019
	B	9	5.60	2.875		
Test 2	A	10	9.80	.422	1.387	.182
	B	9	9.30	1.059		

Test 3	A	10	9.10	1.197	.183	.857
	B	9	9.00	1.247		
Test 4	A	10	7.10	2.183	.000	1.000
	B	9	7.10	1.912		
Test 5	A	10	7.70	1.947	1.687	.109
	B	9	6.10	2.283		
DT 1	A	10	8.44	1.333	1.448	.166
	B	9	7.30	2.003		
DT 2	A	9	9.22	1.093	.665	.515
	B	10	8.70	2.111		
DT 3	A	10	7.33	1.323	-.466	.647
	B	9	7.60	1.174		

4.2.2. The Performance of Participants with Intermediate Proficiency Level in Two Groups

Among the participants with intermediate proficiency levels, there existed a significant difference between Group A and Group B in test 1 and delayed test 2. The mean level of test 1 of group A (mean=9.27) is much higher than that of group B (mean=4.86); $p=0.005 < 0.05$; the mean level of delayed test 2 of Group A (mean=9.55) is much higher than that of Group B (mean=8.43; $p=0.002 < 0.05$). This means Group A did much better than Group B in both the productive knowledge of orthography and receptive knowledge of word meaning test. And in the delayed test of receptive knowledge of syntax, group A has slight advantages in receptive knowledge of syntax ($p= 0.03$).

Thus, intermediate proficiency participants performed well in productive knowledge of orthography and receptive knowledge of word meaning under the word-list presentation, and they did slightly better on the receptive knowledge of syntax.

Table-5. The performance of participants with intermediate proficiency level in two group

Types of test	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.(P)
Test 1	A	11	9.27	1.009	4.017	.005
	B	7	4.86	2.795		
Test 2	A	11	9.27	1.191	-.023	.982
	B	7	9.29	1.113		
Test 3	A	11	9.27	1.489	.182	.858
	B	7	9.14	1.464		
Test 4	A	11	6.09	2.508	-.300	.768
	B	7	6.43	1.988		
Test 5	A	11	6.82	1.601	1.948	.069
	B	7	5.00	2.380		
DT 1	A	11	8.36	.674	2.008	.087
	B	7	6.57	2.299		
DT 2	A	11	9.55	.688	3.641	.002
	B	7	8.43	.535		
DT 3	A	11	7.55	.820	2.389	.030
	B	7	6.14	1.676		

4.2.3. The Performance of Participants with Lower Proficiency Level in Two Groups

There was significant difference in test 1 and DT 1 between two groups. The mean level of test 1 in Group A (mean=7.47) is much higher than that of Group B (mean=4.86). And the mean level of DT 1 is 8.40, also higher than that of Group B (mean= 6.00).

There was no significant difference between lower proficiency participants in two kinds of presentations except for the orthography knowledge both in post-test and delayed post-test.

Table-6. The performance of participants with lower proficiency level in two groups

Types of test	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.(P)
Test 1	A	15	7.47	2.625	2.606	.014
	B	14	4.86	2.958		
Test 2	A	15	9.41	.795	.169	.867
	B	14	9.36	1.008		
Test 3	A	15	7.18	2.811	-.612	.545
	B	14	7.79	2.694		
Test 4	A	15	4.24	2.359	-.128	.899
	B	14	4.36	2.951		
Test 5	A	15	4.24	2.587	.651	.520
	B	14	3.64	2.437		

DT 1	A	15	8.40	.910	3.450	.003
	B	14	6.00	2.449		
DT 2	A	15	8.67	.900	1.047	.305
	B	14	8.00	2.287		
DT 3	A	15	6.63	2.062	.513	.612
	B	14	6.21	2.326		

4.3. Discussion of the Results

The results of the study revealed that there was statistically significant difference between the effect of word-list presentation and that of contextual presentation on the production of orthography and receptive knowledge of orthography.

4.3.1. The Performance of Participants in Two Presentation Models

It was found that participants using word-list presentation model did better than those using contextual presentation. Participants under word-list presentation performed well in the productive knowledge of orthography. And under word-list presentation the retention of receptive orthography knowledge was kept longer and better. The difference might be attributed to the following factors:

There were 10 target words in word-list presentation, but 553 words in contextual presentation. Other words in the context distracted the attention of participants, while participants can concentrate on the written form of the target words in the word-list presentation. With the same learning time, participants under word-list presentation had less burden in terms of information processing (remembering words). Besides, under contextual presentation, participants need to understand the given reading material, they spent less time on remembering the words than participants in the word-list presentation. Even simple repetition can have a great effect on the information. That is to say, the more time to review the information, the better the information is kept. Participants under word-list presentation had more time to repeat the knowledge they learned.

Craik and Lockhart (1972), hold that retention doesn't depend on time, but the levels of processing. The greater the processing of information during learning, the more it will be retained and remembered. Processing will be automatic unless attention is focused on a particular level. The target words in the contextual presentation were situated in a text, so once they understand the main idea of the material, participants didn't need to put more cognitive load on distinguishing, and evaluating the target words. The processing of words was not deep enough. This explains why acquisition of meaning and form, grammatical functions and syntax and associations were slightly lower than that of word-list presentation. The processing theory also can explain why participants under contextual presentation didn't preform as well as participants under word-list presentation on receptive knowledge of orthography in the immediate and delayed post-test. And as there is no significant difference in the performance of participants in the immediate post-test (except productive knowledge of orthography), two models of presentations were equally effective in arousing participants' attention to vocabulary. That is to say, two kinds of presentations were equally effective in the short term vocabulary memory.

Other reasons might be that the participants have the stereotype of "remembering the form and meaning" in vocabulary learning. And this can also explain why participants under word-list presentation performed much better than participants under contextual presentation on productive knowledge of orthography. Prince (1996), argue that efficient vocabulary leaning requires fine machining by extracting the vocabulary from context, and list the target words with corresponding mother language, that is the word-list. Participants under word-list presentation did better than participants under contextual presentation also proved (File and Adams, 2010) view that it's better to teach the words in isolated environment.

Although, there was great difference in the productive knowledge of orthography in the immediate post-test, there is no statistically significant difference between two presentations in the receptive knowledge of orthography. However, the retention of receptive knowledge of orthography under contextual presentation dropped a lot. The reason might be the insufficient processing of words due to the time factor.

All the participants were weak in grammatical functions and syntax and associations. And this can be predicted through the presentation procedures. In word-list presentation, words were presented individually, although grammatical functions (part of speech) were mentioned, no practice was done. While under the contextual presentation, although the context of the target words were presented clearly, the context was limited (only one kind of usage was presented). Participants can use target words in this context, but not in others, which caused incorrect usage of the words. In conclusion, to acquire the grammatical functions, syntax and associations of words require contextual richness.

4.3.2. The Performance of Participants with Different Proficiency Levels

Among upper, intermediate and lower English proficiency participants, there were different test results in vocabulary knowledge. Participants under word-list presentation did better than those under contextual presentation in productive knowledge of orthography. There is no significant difference between two kinds of presentation in other types of vocabulary knowledge and their retention. Participants with upper proficiency outperformed others in productive knowledge of orthography. The reasons might be: first, upper proficiency participants were more skilled when coming across unknown words. They may choose to explore more knowledge for a new word than just know its form and pronunciation. Second, as mentioned before, participants under contextual presentation had less time concentrating on the fine machining and repetition of words than participants under word-list presentation. This

explains why the participants under contextual presentation model were weaker in productive knowledge of orthography.

Participants with intermediate English proficiency level performed much better in both productive and receptive orthography under word-list presentation. Participants under word-list presentation not only did better in productive knowledge of orthography, they did better in remembering the word meaning and syntax knowledge as well. Webb (2007), demonstrated in his research: for intermediate learners spelling is likely to be the first knowledge type acquired as Schmitt and McCarthy (1997), and Schmitt (1998), Schmitt (2000) suggested. The reasons might be elaboration effect. Elaboration is the process of increasing the information that is being learned. It can be logical inference, continuous information or examples, anything that can connect to information. There is quite a lot of evidence: when people are learning new information, they will elaborate; the elaborated materials can help memorize; the increase degree of elaboration has a great role in promoting memory, and elaboration can help deepen information processing (Gui Shichun, 2001). Under word-list presentation, participants should do much elaboration to remember the words. The limited information given by word-list presentation forced participants to build new connections between target words and their own cognition. The connections building on their own experience were more efficient than the connections made by others (in the given context). 章柏成 (2004), found that sentences made with target words according to one's daily life or cognition structure is more helpful in enhancing the long-term preservation of the target words than sentences made by teachers or without sentences. The reason why participants under contextual presentation model didn't perform well in remembering the word meaning and syntax knowledge is that for contextual presentation model, the context richness should be considered using the contextual presentation. And according to Sun (2014), contextual richness was closely related to vocabulary knowledge of spelling, grammar and syntax, and contributed exclusively to gains in meaning and paradigmatic association. Thus, under contextual presentation, participants lacking in rich context was the reason why they didn't perform well in remembering the meaning and syntax knowledge.

Among lower proficiency participants, there was difference between two kinds of presentation in both productive and receptive knowledge of orthography. No significant difference was found between other types of vocabulary knowledge. The result echoed Nation's view (1990): it's feasible to use word-list presentation at the beginning of vocabulary acquisition. Although the lower proficiency participants were not beginners, their English proficiency was low. And the process of learning a word begins with the learning of written and spoken form and meaning. This proved the advantages of word-list presentation in the beginning of learning a language or a word, especially in orthographic knowledge.

5. Conclusion

This research examined the effect of word-list presentation and contextual presentation on the acquisition of word knowledge by participants with different proficiency levels. Compared with contextual presentation, word-list presentation has advantages in learning the orthographic knowledge. Three types of participants performed better under word-list presentation on the aspect of orthography which further proved the advantage of word-list presentation in the acquisition of orthographic knowledge. Especially in the productive knowledge of orthography, the intermediate participants perform the best among three subgroups. But the advantage word-list presentation has on orthography was not obvious among participants with upper proficiency levels, for the difference only showed in productive knowledge of orthography.

Word-list presentation was good in both productive and receptive orthographic knowledge, and it's good for lower proficiency level of students. But that doesn't mean word-list presentation was good in other types of vocabulary knowledge. Besides, the advantage was not obvious among upper level participants.

Contextual presentation should include different kinds of context for one target word. The context provided in contextual presentation was not enough for participants' vocabulary learning. The richness of context can provide a full image of the target word for learners. Thus, in the contextual presentation, multiple contexts should be presented.

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Appendix

Contextual Material

How to Write a Resume

One of the most important elements in a successful job search is your resume. A resume is a business document that outlines your work experience, education, and skills, on paper. An effective resume sells you; an ineffective one merely states facts about you. Your resume, then, should summarize your strongest skills and achievements.

A resume does not tell your life story. Rather, it should describe important background data and experiences, highlight your major strengths and accomplishments, and reflect your ability to lead others, solve problems effectively, and be creative on the job. A resume should consider the needs of the reader—your potential employer—as well as your own successes and ambitions. Be brief. One page written with quality and precision will impress readers without wasting their time on unnecessary details. If, on the other hand, you have more than ten years of experience, a two-page resume may be **appropriate** [ə'prɒprɪət]adj. 恰当的 ; 适合的.

It takes less than one minute for a potential employer to scan your resume. Thus, to be successful, your resume should reflect who you are, the businesses and environments you find attractive, and the career objectives you have established. You should take some time for self-assessment and job research prior to working on the first draft of your resume.

Writing your resume Focus: Whenever possible, **elaborate** [r'læbəret]v. 详述 ; 详尽说明 on measurable accomplishments and achievements in your resume; do not merely list jobs held and duties performed. Your resume should show, through examples, how you could **assist** [ə'sɪst]vt. 帮助 ; 协助 the company.

Length: A one-page resume with one or two significant jobs will be attractive and easy to read. Avoid **overloading** (超负荷) your resume with unnecessary information in order to increase the length or to make it appear that you have more experience.

Format ['fɔrmæt]n. 设计 ; 安排 ; 格式 : By far the most frequently used format is **chronological** [krənə'lɒdʒɪkl]adj. 按时间顺序排列的. In the chronological resume, work experience is presented in **reverse** [rɪ'vɜ:s]adj. 相反的时间 order. Your present job, or last job, is listed first. Various positions held inside one company are also described in reverse order. This format highlights achievements in specific jobs

Grammar and style: The more uniform you keep your sentence structure, the easier it will be to read your resume. Be sure that all sentences are written in the same tense. **Stylistic considerations** (问题方面的考虑) should be used to organize the **layout** ['leɪaʊt]n. 布局 ; 设计 of your resume. Different type and print styles, as well as

highlighting organizations, titles, departments, and promotions, will make your resume easier to read. However, it is wise not to use too many different styles, as this can make the resume look busy or unprofessional.

Action words: Describe your activities and accomplishments using active verbs that communicate to the reader you are a person who takes the **initiative** [ɪˈnɪʃətɪv]n.主动性；首创精神 and can thus make a significant individual contribution to the organization.

Above all, make sure you feel your resume truly reflects the best of who you are, personally and professionally. There is no room for modesty in your resume, just as there is no room for little white lies, innocent though they may seem. Having really had a good look at your experiences and goals, set about putting your best foot forward (你最好的一面), starting with a **solid** [ˈsɒlɪd]adj.出色的resume. And when you're done, read it over, and ask yourself, "Based on this resume, would I hire this **applicant** [ˈæplɪkənt]n.c申请人?" Hopefully, the answer will be a most definite "Yes!"

T or F question:

- Q1: A good resume tells you your life story. _____ (F)
 Q2: Your experience should be showed in chronological order. _____ (T)
 Q3: The words you use should be active. _____ (T)

Post-tests

1. Dictation: write down the word you hear (1/10)

2. Multiple choices (1/10)

- () 1. A appoprite B aproppiate C appropriate, D aproppiate
 () 2. A elaborate B elabrate C ilabarote D ilaborate
 () 3. A asist B essist C assist D esist
 () 4. A formet B fomat C format D fomet
 () 5. A chronological B chornological C chorlonogical D chrological
 () 6. A revease B reverse C riverse D riverse
 () 7. A layout B lyout C layout D luyout
 () 8. A initiative B intatative C initative D inititave
 () 9. A solyd B solid C souldid D soulyd
 () 10. A applacant B aplicant C applicant D aplicant

3. Translate the words into Chinese.(1/10)

Appropriate:

Elaborate:

Assist:

Format:

Chronological:

Reverse:

Layout:

Initiative:

Solid:

Applicant:

4. Use these words to make a sentence.(1/10)

e.g. house: This is the house that I always dreamed about!

Appropriate:

Elaborate:

Assist:

Format:

Chronological:

Reverse:

Layout:

Initiative:

Solid:

Applicant:

5. Give another two words that are associated with the words below.(1/10)

e.g. house: beautiful, room

给出一个正确单词0.5分

Appropriate:

Elaborate:

Assist:

Format:

Chronological:

Reverse:

Layout:

Initiative:
Solid:
Applicant: