The Effects of Oral Presentation and Summary Making on Iranian Male and Female EFL Learners' Vocabulary Retention

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Abstract: The present study tried to investigate the effects oral presentation and summary making on vocabulary retention. For this purpose, sixty Iranian male and female learners of English were assigned to a control group and two experimental conditions with a pretest, and delayed posttest design. The scores obtained from the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) confirmed the homogeneity of the participating groups in the pretest. The participants took pretest and the subjects who were familiar with targeted items were excluded from the study. During the four sessions of treatment, male and female participants in oral presentation group (OPG) were required to read three short stories and retell the stories orally the next day and the participants of the summary making group (SMG) were required to read the same short stories and make summary on the stories the next day and the participants of the control group drilled the targeted items in traditional way. All participants took the posttests using the same testing package applied in the pretest but the order of the items changed in order to reduce the possibility of recalling the sequence of correct responses. Results of the statistical analyses revealed that both the oral presentation and summary making groups had significantly improved in L2 vocabulary retention. The oral presentation group outperformed the summary making group.

Keywords: Oral Presentation, Summary Making, Vocabulary Retention.

Introduction

The critical element in language teaching and learning is vocabulary. In order to express one's idea, he/she needs to learn satisfactory amounts of vocabularies. The words arrange together based on grammar and form a message. One cannot learn language without vocabulary (Kang, 1995). Both teachers and learners try to find out which vocabulary teaching and learning methods are more beneficial or even the best one. In accordance with the studies, beginners prefer learning words separately, that is, using a list of vocabularies to memorize, while advanced learners, although there are some exceptions, try to learn words in context (Ellis, 1994).

One of the most remarkable problems in learning new vocabularies is their retention. As learners or teachers of languages, we all have the experience of trying to recall, without success, a vocabulary item that has recently been faced and used or a word that has been in our vocabulary for a long time, but seems to elude us when it is looked for. The inability to recall vocabularies is experienced not only in comprehension, but also in the production of spoken or written discourse. We often realize that we heard or saw a word and knew what it meant, but we cannot remember its meaning any more. In worse cases of forgetting, in order to account for our inability of retention we may believe a word is totally new, while in fact it was familiar to us at some point in the past. There are a variety of trends in order to examine the amount of retention of vocabularies and in the

present study we tried to compare the difference between oral presentation and summary making on vocabulary retention.

This study aimed to answer the following research questions:
1. Does oral presentation of texts improve the vocabulary retention of learners?
2. Does summary making of texts improve the vocabulary retention of learners?
3. Do oral presentation and summary making affect vocabulary retention differentially?

Literature review

One thing that students, teachers, materials writers, and researchers all have consensus is that vocabulary acquisition is an essential part of mastering a second language. Although in some decades teaching and learning vocabulary was ignored, now there is a widespread agreement on the necessity of vocabulary learning for language learners in order to enhance their language learning ability (Coady & Huckin). All scholars agree that the best means of achieving vocabulary learning is still unclear, because it depends on a wide variety of factors (Schmitt, 2008). Channell (1988) mentioned that teaching vocabulary should be seen as a separate filed in foreign language teaching because it is crucial to improve language proficiency. Carter (1992) found "the need for much more vocabulary to be taught and learned as a separate activity rather than, say, part of a grammar or reading lesson."

Learning vocabulary is one concern of the scholars, but recalling the learned vocabulary is another issue that scholars regard. Different ways have been tried in the history of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to help learners remember words more efficiently. The present study has compared two techniques to evaluate the amount of the vocabulary retention of learners, (i.e., oral presentation vs. summary making). Surprisingly there is not much work to investigate oral presentation or summary making effects on vocabulary retention.

Methodology

Participants

The participants of the study were all the male and female pre-intermediate Iranian language learners at Bayan institute in Ardabil, Iran. Eighty male and female learners at pre-intermediate level were chosen. In order to ensure the homogeneity of the subjects Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administered and fourteen participants were excluded because their scores were higher or lower the mean score. Then, the participants randomly assigned to a control and two experimental groups, and each group consisted of 22 participants. It is imperative to mention that, the age of the participants was not considered as an influencing factor.

Instruments

Reading Texts: Three short stories were selected from the Internet. To assure that the texts were appropriate for the participants in terms of their L2 proficiency level, the readability of the texts was checked through readability software that can be found in http://www.readability-score.com and Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease. In Flesch-Kincaid readability test, a higher score indicates that the text is easier to read and a lower score implies that the text is difficult to read. Table 3.1 represents the readability index of the texts.

Table 1. The Readability Index of the Texts.

Text. 1: A Glass of Milk	88.4
Text 2: Dear Daddy	81
Text 3: Life is Beautiful	87.5

The computed indices underscored that the texts were appropriate for the participants.

Oxford Placement Test (OPT): To ensure the homogeneity of the participants in terms of their L2 proficiency, the participants took Oxford Placement Test (in short OPT). OPT is suitable for measuring the proficiency of L2 learners from elementary to intermediate levels. This test has three main sections including Vocabulary and Grammar, Reading, and Writing. The total score of Vocabulary and Grammar is 50. The total

score of Reading is 10 and the total score of Writing is also 10. Participants whose scores ranges are 0–20 in Vocabulary and Grammar sections are at the elementary level. Participants who obtain 21–30 are at pre-intermediate level and if the participants take a score between 31 and 50, they are considered to be at the Intermediate level. In the reading section, interpretation of the scores is: 0–4 elementary level, 5–7 pre-intermediate level and 8–10 intermediate. It should be mentioned that, in this study the writing section was not administered. The whole 80 participants of the study took OPT, and the obtained scores determined that we should exclude 14 participants because of obtaining scores that were higher or lower than pre- intermediate level.

Procedure

Participants took the OPT and based upon the results of the test, 14 participants were excluded because their scores were higher or lower than the mean score. Then, sixty six participants were assigned in one control group and two experimental groups, each group contained twenty-two subjects.

Then, the participants of all groups took pre-test, and they were asked to write the meaning of the targeted words they are familiar with. After administering the pre-test, it was revealed that six participants were familiar with the targeted items and those six participants were excluded from the study. Then, participants of all groups took the treatment sessions. In the first session, participants of oral presentation group (OPG) and summary making group (SMG) were asked to read one of the short stories and the participants of the control group (CG) drilled the targeted items in traditional way (repeating the words separately after the teacher) . In the next session, the participants of OPG were asked to retell the story orally, and the participants of SMG were asked to write a summary on the story, then the participants of both groups were asked to read the second short story, and the participants of CG did the same procedure as the first session. In the third session, the participants of the OPG were asked to retell the second short story orally and the subjects of SMG wrote a summary on the story, and once again the participants of CG followed the same procedures as in the previous sessions. In the last session of treatment, the participants of OPG retold the third short story and the participants of SMG made a summary on the third short story and learners in CG again were taught the vocabularies in traditional way. Then, Two weeks later all participants were given a post-test similar to pre-test, but the order of the items was different in order to diminish the possibility of recalling the sequence of correct responses.

Results

Following the scoring of the tests, the results were put under a series of statistical analyses (SPSS, version 20) to provide answers to the study's three Research Questions. Inferential statistics, such as *t*-tests and One-Way between groups ANOVA, were utilized in order to answer the Research Questions.

The present Study, aims to answer three Research Questions,
1. Does oral presentation of texts improve the vocabulary retention of learners?
2. Does summary making on texts improve the vocabulary retention of learners?
3. Do oral presentation and summary making affect vocabulary retention differentially?

Firstly, the normality of the distribution of scores was checked.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		oral presentation pretest	summarizing pretest	control pretest	oral presentation posttest	summarizing posttest	control posttest
N		20	20	20	20	20	20
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	1.2000	1.5000	1.1500	20.6500	25.7500	12.4000
	Std. Deviation	0.76777	0.68825	0.48936	1.72520	3.32257	1.84676
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0.251	0.366	0.420	0.181	0.120	0.136
	Positive	0.203	0.234	0.420	0.181	0.120	0.136
	Negative	-0.251	-0.366	-0.330	-0.133	-0.101	-0.107
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.124	1.638	1.880	0.808	0.537	0.607
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0.160	0.009	0.002	0.532	0.936	0.855

As we can see the assumption of normality was violated, for this reason Kolmogorov-Smirnov was conducted.

In order to check the first and second Research Questions, Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was conducted.

Test Statistics[a]			
	oral presentation posttest - oral presentation pretest	summarizing posttest - summarizing pretest	control posttest - control pretest
Z	-3.949[b]	-3.930[b]	-3.935[b]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000

As table above shows, the sig. values are less than .05, so the difference is significant.

In order to check the difference among groups Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted.

Test Statistics[a,b]	
	posttest scores
Chi-Square	27.050
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	
b. Grouping Variable: activity	

As table shows, the sig. value is less than .05, implies that there is statistically significance difference in variables across the three groups.

Ranks			
	activity	N	Mean Rank
posttest scores	oral presentation	22	31.93
	summarizing	22	42.16
	control	16	12.50
	Total	60	

The Mean Rank in the Table above indicates that, the oral presentation group has the highest overall ranking among other groups.

In order to answer the third Research Question, the following statistics were conducted.

Test Statistics[a]	
	posttest scores
Mann-Whitney U	97.500
Wilcoxon W	350.500
Z	-3.405
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
a. Grouping Variable: activity	

Ranks			
	activity	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	oral presentation	22	15.93	350.50
posttest scores	summarizing	22	29.07	639.50
	Total	44		

Test Statistics[a]	
	posttest scores
Mann-Whitney U	.000
Wilcoxon W	136.000
Z	-5.226
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.000[b]
a. Grouping Variable: activity	
b. Not corrected for ties.	

Ranks			
	activity	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
posttest scores	oral presentation	22	27.50	605.00

control	16	8.50	136.00
Total	38		

Test Statistics[a]

	posttest scores
Mann-Whitney U	64.000
Wilcoxon W	200.000
Z	-3.320
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.001[b]

a. Grouping Variable: activity
b. Not corrected for ties.

Ranks

	activity	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
posttest scores	summarizing	22	24.59	541.00
	control	16	12.50	200.00
	Total	38		

The tables above mention that the oral presentation group surpassed the control group and also summary making group did better than the control group. On the other hand, the oral presentation group outperformed the summary making group.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, we compared the effects of oral presentation and summary making on vocabulary retention of learners and the results revealed that the participants in both experimental groups surpassed the control group, and the participants of the oral presentation group outperformed the summary making group.

The results of this study have implications for teachers, curriculum designers, and students. Based on the results using techniques like oral presentation and summary making play an impressive role in vocabulary retention of learners. In order to make students more motivated, it may be useful to use stories and texts which are interesting for learners and leaners encounter such texts in their every-day life.

Although the findings of the present study may contribute to the field of foreign language teaching, some limitations need to be addressed. The number of short stories and consequently, number of treatment sessions were limited, the sample size was smaller than one would wish for, and also the age factor was not considered as an influential factor. These limitations might be potential area for furthers studies.

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