

The Effect of Teaching Etymology on Inputting English Vocabulary into Chinese High School Students

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Introduction

- Etymology is the study of the origins and meaning of words. (Winston, J. E. ,1999) .
- And there have been trials of using etymology to enrich vocabulary of a language. For instance, “a one- semester etymology course can raise the class vocabulary average a full grade level”(Sadler, J. D. ,1970).
- However, no study to date has been conducted to apply etymology to inputting English vocabulary into Chinese high school students and test its effect.
- **Objective:** To compare etymology way with other traditional ones to input English vocabulary into Chinese high school students and show their effects.

Method

Participants

Group	S/N	Name	Gender	Level
1	01	Ziling Xu	Female	129
1	02	Shurui Zhang	Male	123
1	03	Yuan Wang	Female	128
1	04	Yi Liu	Male	123
1	05	Wanru He	Female	127
Average Level				126
2	01	Hongyu Fang	Male	124
2	02	Yujie Ye	Female	127
2	03	Yingchao Fang	Male	125
2	04	Hongye Zhang	Female	126
2	05	Tianpeng Jiang	Male	126
Average Level				126

Note: Level 129/128/127/126/125/124/123 = Average English Score of the Participant out of Full Mark 150.

Vocabulary

S/N	Word	Word Classes
01	querulous	adjective
02	rancid	adjective
03	sate	verb
04	taxing	adjective
05	upstage	adjective

06	verisimilar	adjective
07	advert	verb
08	avocation	noun
09	atheism	noun
10	tepid	adjective

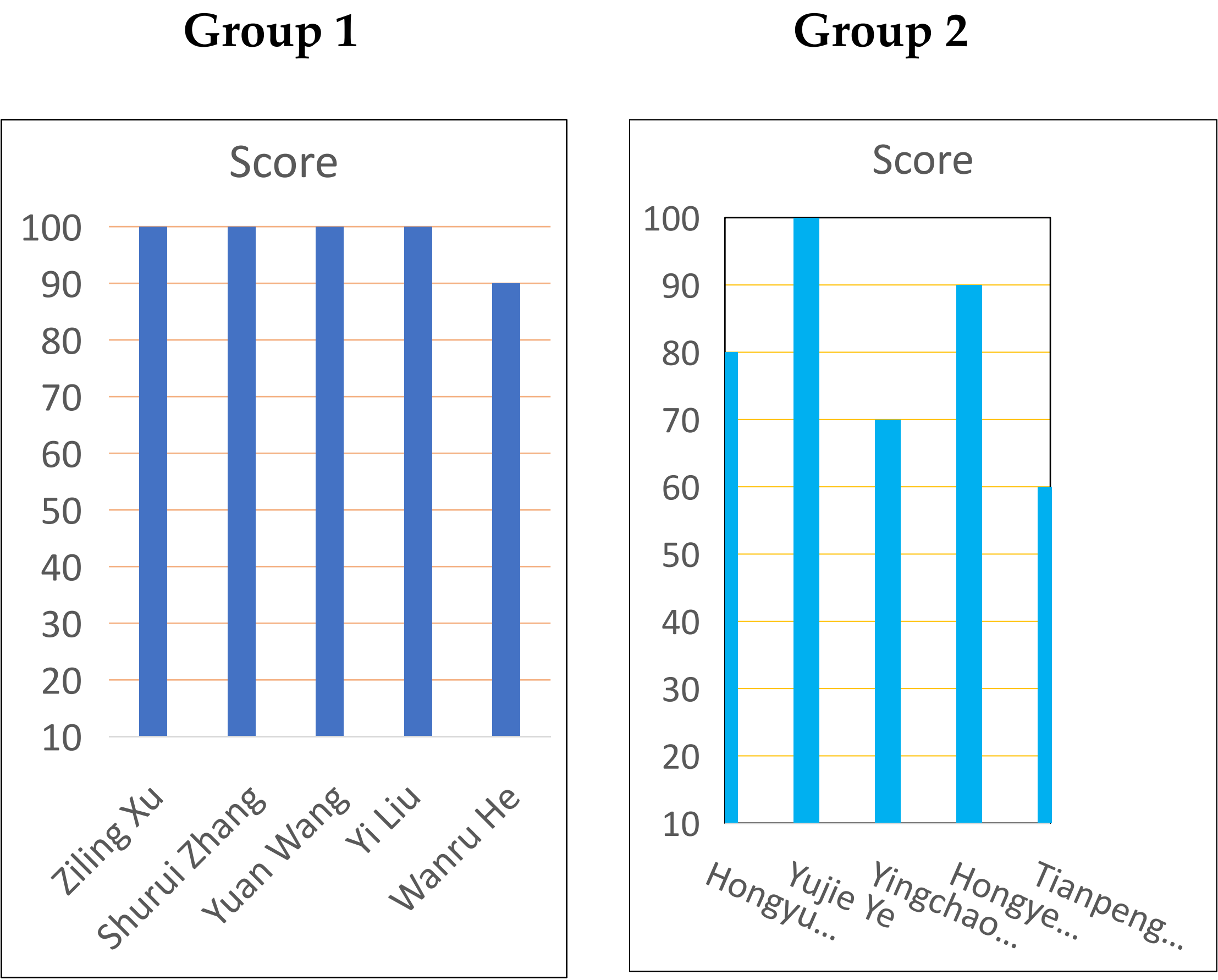
Note: All words selected randomly are all new words to the participants.

Input and Output

Group	Way	Duration	Test	Full Mark
1	Etymology	10mins	Dictation	100
2	Traditional	10mins	Dictation	100

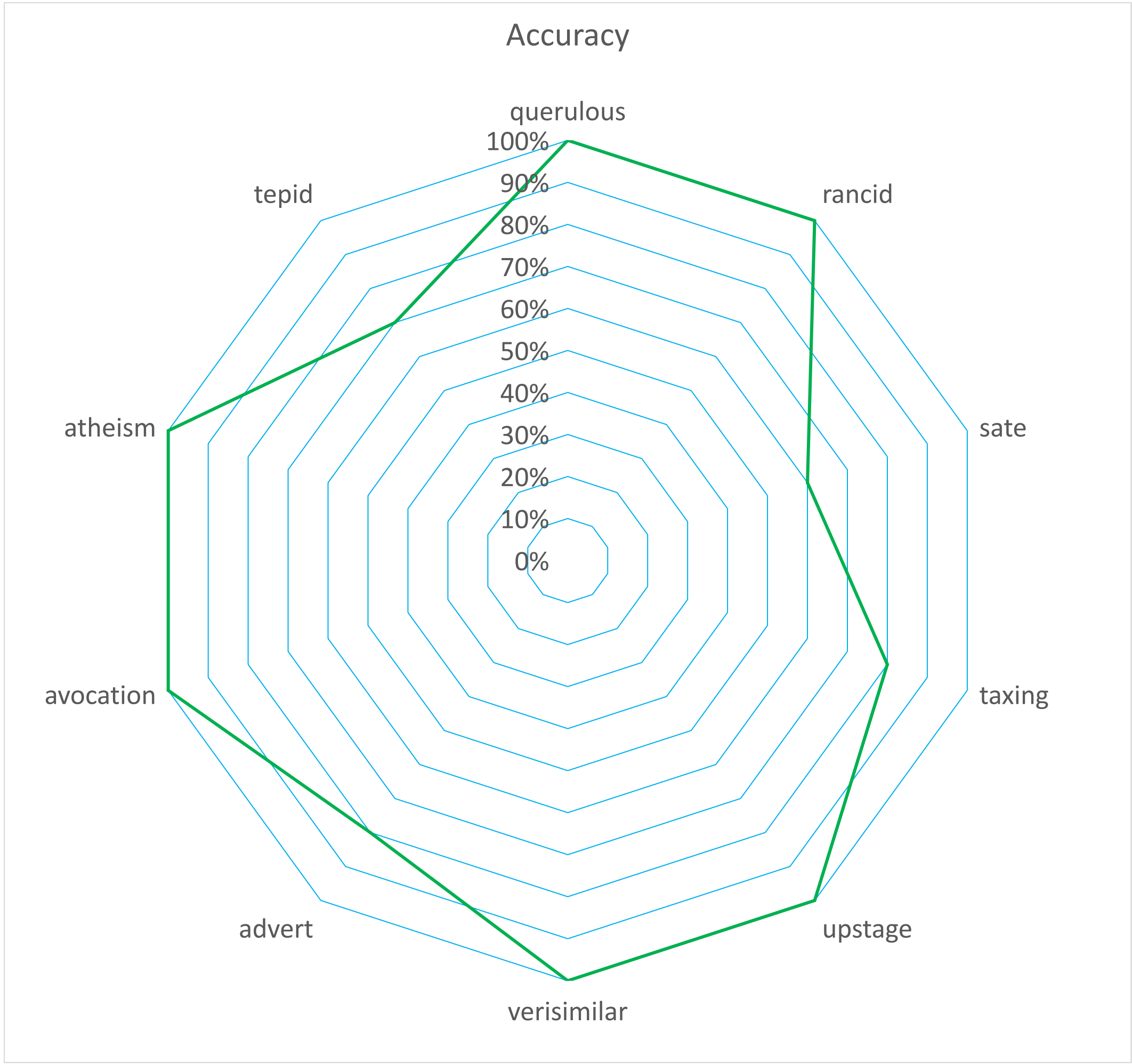
Note: The duration time,10 minutes refer to the time of reciting the words. Teaching time is neglected.

Score Results



Note: The Average Score of Group 1 = 98, Group 2 = 80

Accuracy Results



◆ As is shown in chart, the accuracy of the words *querulous*,*rancid*, *upstage*, *verisimilar*, *avocation* and *atheism* are all 100%; the accuracy of the words *taxing* and *advert* are 80%; the accuracy of the word *tepid* is 70% ; the accuracy of the word *sate* is 60%;

◆ The shortest or simplest word has got the lowest accuracy and those who failed to spell it were all participants in group 2;

◆ The low accuracy words , sate, tepid, advert and taxing are all relatively easier to spell compared to the rest six words.

Conclusions

● From the test results we may reasonably arrive at the conclusion that teaching in an etymology way is more effective than a traditional way on inputting English vocabulary into Chinese high school students.

● Etymology way is of morphology and morpholgy is of semiology or form. Etymology way establishes a direct form-meaning or orthography-semantics (O-S)connection, while traditional ways are of an indirect link (Orthography-Phonology-Semantics, O-P-S) between a word form and its meaning, which is” gradually replaced by direct links emerging between orthography and semantics over time. More recent evidence, however, suggests that children might be making direct links between orthography and semantics from the early stages ...” (Kate Nation, 2009). This theory accounts for why the simplest word got the lowest accuracy due to no direct (O-S) link.

● Etymology shows its sophistication. For instance, “young children are sensitive to the frequency and legality of different orthographic patterns...” (Cassar& Treiman ,1997) .

● For Chinese students their native Chinese characters are memorized via their forms by using one’ s right brain. “For according to Ornstein, the more implicit, tacit, multimodal intuitive cultures of the East would be right brain.” (Rober E. Ornatein,1972).

References

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