

INABILITY TO USE ACTIVE VOCABULARY IN SPEECH

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Annotatsiya: Chet tilini o'rganayotgan ko'p odamlar bitta muammoga duch kelishadi: ular ko'p so'zlarni bilishadi, lekin gapirish kerak bo'lganda bu so'zlar esiga kelmaydi. Buni "passiv lug'at" deb atashadi. Biz kitob o'qiganda yoki kino ko'rganda bu so'zlarni oson tushunamiz, lekin jonli muloqotda negadir faqat eng oddiy so'zlarni ishlatamiz. Buning sababi — hayajonlanish va gapirganda o'ylashga vaqt kamligidir. Ushbu maqolada nima uchun bunday bo'lishi va bilgan so'zlarimizni nutqimizda ko'proq ishlatish uchun nima qilish kerakligi haqida gaplashamiz.

Kalit so'zlar: passiv lug'at, jonli muloqot, hayajonlanish, vaqt tanqisligi

Аннотация: Многие люди, которые учат иностранный язык, сталкиваются с одной и той же проблемой: они знают много слов, но не могут вспомнить их, когда нужно говорить. Эти слова называются «пассивным словарем». Мы легко понимаем их в книгах или фильмах, но в живом разговоре почему-то используем только самые простые выражения. Это происходит из-за волнения и того, что в разговоре у нас мало времени на раздумья. В этой работе мы обсудим, почему так получается и как можно тренироваться, чтобы начать использовать все свои знания в речи.

Ключевые слова: пассивный словарь, живой разговор, волнение, мало времени.

Abstract: Many people who learn a foreign language face the same problem: they know many words, but they cannot remember them when they need to talk. This is called "passive vocabulary." We understand these words easily in books or movies, but in a real conversation, we often use only very simple language. This happens because we feel nervous and do not have much time to think while speaking. This article explains why this happens and how we can practice more to start using all the words we know in our speech.

Key words: passive vocabulary, real conversation, nervous, lack of time.

Introduction.

In the realm of second language acquisition, one of the most persistent and frustrating challenges faced by learners is the significant discrepancy between their receptive and productive vocabularies. While many individuals possess a vast mental library of sophisticated terms, they often struggle to activate this knowledge during spontaneous conversation. This phenomenon, often referred to as the "lexical gap," creates a barrier to achieving true oral fluency and prevents speakers from conveying the precise nuances of their thoughts.

The core issues surrounding this problem stem from the nature of memory and real-time processing. A major concern is that learners frequently rely on "safe" and repetitive language, which hinders their ability to sound professional or academically competent. This leads to a plateau in language development where, despite an extensive understanding of complex texts, the speaker's active output remains basic and uninspiring.

Several underlying reasons contribute to this barrier. Primarily, cognitive overload during communication forces the brain to prioritize familiar, "low-effort" words over more complex synonyms. Furthermore, traditional learning methods often emphasize passive recognition rather than active recall practice, resulting in weak neural pathways for sophisticated vocabulary. Psychological factors, such as performance anxiety, also play a pivotal role, as stress can significantly impair the memory retrieval process in high-pressure situations.

The purpose of this article is to analyze these cognitive and psychological obstacles and to outline effective strategies to bridge the gap between passive and active language usage. By exploring techniques such as contextual immersion and deliberate retrieval practice, this study aims to provide a comprehensive roadmap for learners to transform their latent lexical potential into a functional and fluent tool for communication.

Literature Review and Methodology.

Incapacity of applying the active vocabulary or using elite words in speech is a common trouble of foreign learners, in particular when it comes to oral speech or in interviews.

How Vocabulary is Learned by Stuart Webb and Paul Nation (2017) is a comprehensive, research-based guide detailing how to teach and learn vocabulary efficiently. It emphasizes that vocabulary acquisition requires two core conditions: repetition (quantity of encounters) and mental processing (quality of engagement). This research provides practical, evidence-based techniques for classroom instruction, covering high-frequency words, vocabulary size, and the "learning burden" of new words.

Moreover studies by Laufer (1998) suggest that while learners may recognize thousands of words, they often experience a "plateau" where their active usage remains restricted to high-frequency, "safe" vocabulary. This stagnation is often attributed to a

lack of depth of knowledge—the inability to understand a word's collocations, register, and nuances.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, the activation of passive vocabulary is hindered by cognitive load. Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985) posits that producing language is cognitively more demanding than comprehending it. In spontaneous speech, the brain must simultaneously manage grammar, pronunciation, and social cues. Consequently, the "retrieval effort" required to access sophisticated synonyms becomes too high, forcing the speaker to default to simpler, more accessible terms to maintain fluency.

Modern research in cognitive psychology, particularly by Bjork and Bjork (1992), emphasizes the importance of retrieval strength. Unlike "storage strength" (how well a word is remembered), retrieval strength determines how quickly a word can be accessed. Without deliberate retrieval practice—the act of forcing the brain to recall a word without prompts—the pathways to active vocabulary remain weak and underutilized.

While Laufer (1998) and Nation (2001) emphasize the cognitive barriers of lexical retrieval, Alimova (2022) complements this by highlighting the socio-cultural dimension. She argues that the inability to use active vocabulary often stems from a lack of linguo-cultural awareness, which is essential for effective communication development. As Alimova suggests (2024) that students should boost their productive skills, through this they will focus on their lexical resource as well.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the phenomenon of the "lexical gap" among advanced English learners. Rather than relying solely on statistical data, the study focuses on the behavioral and cognitive patterns that emerge when learners attempt to transition from passive recognition to active production.

The study was conducted with a selected cohort of advanced English language students (CEFR level C1) from a linguistic university in Uzbekistan. These participants were chosen because they exhibit a high level of receptive proficiency (understanding complex texts) but report a persistent inability to employ sophisticated vocabulary during spontaneous oral communication.

Participants were asked to engage in unscripted discussions on socio-cultural topics. These tasks were designed to shift the focus from simple grammar to the nuances and register of the language, as suggested by Alimova (2022).

During these discussions, observations were made regarding the participants' lexical choices. Particular attention was paid to instances of lexical avoidance, where students intentionally substituted precise academic terms with more basic, high-frequency synonyms.

Following the speaking tasks, learners participated in a self-reflection session. They were asked to identify the specific words they "knew" but were unable to "retrieve" in the moment, providing insight into their perceived cognitive load.

Discussion.

The findings of this study offer a multifaceted perspective on the persistent challenge of transitioning vocabulary from passive recognition to active production. The data reveals a significant discrepancy between what learners know in theory and what they can effectively deploy in high-pressure, spontaneous environments.

On a positive note, the results indicate that advanced learners possess impressive storage strength. Having a vast receptive lexicon is a fundamental prerequisite for fluency; it provides the "raw material" necessary for sophisticated thought. Furthermore, the study showed that when participants were given extended planning time, their ability to retrieve complex synonyms improved significantly. This suggests that the "latent" knowledge is indeed present and can be accessed under the right conditions. The high level of metacognitive awareness among students—their ability to recognize their own lexical limitations—is also a positive indicator, as it serves as a primary motivator for deliberate self-improvement.

However, a critical drawback identified in the research is the phenomenon of lexical avoidance. Even when learners are aware of more precise terms, they frequently default to high-frequency, "safe" vocabulary to minimize the risk of error or hesitation. This reliance on repetitive language leads to lexical fossilization, where the speaker's oral proficiency stagnates despite their growing academic knowledge

Results.

The data gathered from the mixed-methods approach reveals several striking trends regarding the discrepancy between receptive and productive vocabulary among advanced learners. It was found that lack of understanding the meaning of the word or the exact collocation is a problem that leads to appearing of this problem. Many students choose a simple way to answer the question with easy words, and do not want to brood themselves with difficult one. In addition, many pupils hesitate to use the elite word because they have a fear of judgment that prevents them to utilize that word.

To mitigate this problem, teachers should create an environment where students can have an access to retrieve those words, because covert knowledge exists in our mind. In order to retrieve it, we should make a suitable environment .Besides this; students should to repeat the words since it will help them to maintain the activeness of lexical resource.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, applying active vocabulary is a common and influential problem among B2-level English learners that negatively affects their participation. Students often feel afraid of making mistakes and being judged by their classmates or even teachers, which prevents them from actively engaging in classroom communication.

However, this issue can be effectively addressed through appropriate teaching strategies .By using different valuable strategies students can learn more academic words and simultaneously apply it in their speech.

It is important for educators too that they should provide an emotional support in order to prevent an appearance of hesitation or fear of being judged .

Future research could explore more specific techniques for reducing these kind of problem.

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