
The Role of Emotional Intensity in the Representation of Abstract Nouns in the Lexicon: Case Study of L2 Speakers

YASIR ALMUKHAIZEEM

DSB 3.10 - 16:25

The interest in studying abstract word has increased following various classical models (Paivio's dual coding, 1973; context availability by Schwanenflugel & Shoben, 1983). Although these models offered interesting ideas regarding the identification of abstract words, the classification and representation of these words in the lexicon requires further scrutiny. Only recently, the role of emotionality has proven to be vital in classifying abstract words in classifying these words into emotional and non-emotional (Kousta, Vigliocco, et al., 2009). The current study examines the behavior of these words not only among monolinguals (n=6), but also among bilingual speakers, highlighting the differences between advanced (n=30) and beginner L2 speakers (n=30). The research questions inquire whether the lexicon of L2 are able to establish embodied emotional knowledge with these words and recall words carrying out this knowledge. The results of the scale experiments indicated that L2 speakers can recognize the embodied knowledge of emotional words (4.88) by scaling them significantly higher compared to non-emotional words (2.40). The data lead us to believe that not all emotional words were rated the same; as L2 speakers, unlike native speakers, reported that emotional words with negative meaning contain more embodied knowledge. Lastly, the recall tasks, as one way of examining these words, fluctuated in two different memory conditions, especially short-term memory. The data indicated that L2 speakers differ in their recall of AWs. Compared to beginners and native speakers, advanced L2 speakers showed a superior level of recall of positive and negative emotional words (2.43, 2.50), with no significant difference in emotional words.

Table 1: Results of recalling AWs among both the experimental and the control groups in the STM.

	Emotional words				Non emotional words	
	Positive		Negative		Number of recalled words	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Native	2.17	0.75	2.33	1.03	3.67	1.37
Advanced	2.43	0.94	2.50	1.14	4.70	1.49
Beginners	1.90	1.09	2.43	0.90	4.50	1.68

Concerning the long-term memory, advanced L2 speakers differed more in their recall of negative (2.57) emotional words compared to positive words (2.17), unlike beginners and native speaker. The advanced L2 speakers continued for recalling words with no emotional better either in the short and the long-term memory.

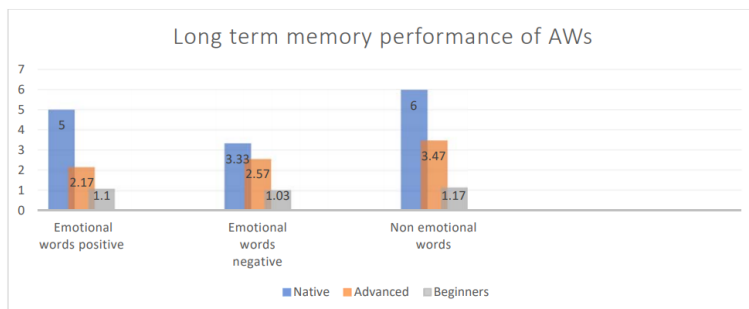


Figure 1: Results of recalling AWs among both the experimental and the control groups in the LTM.