

A Scant Vocabulary Highlights the Poverty of Thought

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In the English literary world, a similar concept to the title of this short reflection piece has appeared before. However, it seems not obvious that such a succinct expression—which fully captures its intended meaning—exists in other cultures. At the very least, such formulations are rarely encountered. At least, this holds in my mother tongue, Vietnamese.

Therefore, I have chosen this concise title for a brief reflection to convey a valuable message in today's chaotic information landscape.



Illustration: “Storytelling” by ChatGPT.

The proposition, i.e., “A scant vocabulary highlights the poverty of thought”, serves to articulate a profound connection between language and cognitive capabilities. Language is not merely a communication tool; it also represents the depth, elevation, and value of consciousness and intellectual processes.

Just as a fertile and vibrant field that nurtures intellectual plants yields rich nutrients for intellectual products, these creations are transmitted through language (including various

forms of linguistic representations)—now enriched, vivid, and persuasive.

Conversely, when language is constrained, and the vocabulary is poor, so too are our thoughts. Without an adequate lexicon, proper structures, and logical constructs, we struggle to construct ideas that can engage, stimulate, and foster the continued development of deep and creative thinking.

Hence, this succinct statement encapsulates an essential message about the significance of language and cognitive abilities in life and learning.

The reality of our human journey underscores the need for vocabulary and linguistic logic. My works, such as *The Kingfisher Story Collection* [1], *Meandering Sobriety* [2], and, more recently, the article on kingfishers in PCB [3], have all been updated to reflect this essential requirement.

Indeed, humans inherently gravitate toward storytelling and listening to narratives.

Furthermore, the emergence and growth of large language models (LLMs) and generative AI, such as ChatGPT, necessitate greater vigilance against our own persistent “intellectual scarcity” [4].

References

[1] Vuong, Q. H. (2022). *The Kingfisher Story Collection*. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/BoBG2NNHY6>

[2] Vuong, Q. H. (2023). *Meandering Sobriety*. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/BoC2TXNX6L>

[3] Vuong, Q. H., & Nguyen, M. H. (2023). Kingfisher: Contemplating the connection between nature and humans through science, art, literature, and lived experiences. *Pacific Conservation Biology*. <https://doi.org/10.1071/PC23044>

[4] Vuong, Q. H., & Ho, M. T. (2024). Escape climate apathy by harnessing the power of generative AI. *AI & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-023-01830-x>