

THE USE OF SAYINGS AS A LEARNING METHOD ON HABITS AND BEHAVIOR STANDARDS.

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*"... thinking, learning and acting can turn our
genes on or off, thus shaping our
brain anatomy and our behavior..."
Norman Doidge "The brain that changes itself"*

INTRODUCTION

Following the current research focused on brain-culture interaction and its "implications for our understanding of the conscious mind, behavior and oneself" (Alvarez, 2014: 12), research focused on eating habits among youngsters is been carried out. Next, I will show you some preliminary results we have obtained from these observations.

We are aware of consciousness as central category and, knowing the "plastic" brain capacity (its flexibility, malleable) through the activity and thought (Doidge, 2008: 15), we seek to understand the "no-connection" that is evident between the externalized speech by people and how they act in this area: feeding. The brain "is the key that opens the door to the conscious mind, explains our behavior ..." (Alvarez, 2014: 12).

We work with sayings considered as a way of transmitting information, knowledge as well as thought, way of thinking, values, beliefs and behaviors.

Sayings can also be seen as a useful tool that passes orally from one generation to another. Although it is true that with the current ways of communication, knowledge of them comes from different media (Internet, television ...). It has been used traditionally by members of a community (society and/or culture) to understand reality they live in and to signify the world they are in, just as it has been present in established relationships both among people and between them and the media (understood as a physical foundation in which to develop their activities).

"When we think with words we relate a number of symbols to one another". We relate words (symbols) with their meanings or definitions (Doidge, 2008: 48). Using sayings we learn to establish relationships of meaning in a certain context (feeding, for example) and to extrapolate it to other contexts (health, sociability, etc.). Perhaps it would be ventured to think that the greater the acquired vocabulary, the greater the "tools" to use, more interpretive and relational wealth and, ultimately, what we usually identify as a "openmindedness (mental structure)" when interpreting reality.

OBJECTIVES

Experience (live it firsthand) is one of the factors that modify how to understand and proceed. External stimuli received by the brain causes it to change (Doidge, 2008: 33). These put in place the "mechanisms" of thinking and acting that characterize it, generating, as well, stimuli. An association / communication takes place in both directions (outside - inside and vice versa). As a result, we are interested in seeing how and to what extent such stimuli are "determining" (if they do it) the end, the rupture or only "relaxation" of some habits learned in the

previous stage of life (childhood) and the beginning of the of the next stage (adulthood). It would also be good to know if learning of norms, values and beliefs obtained in this way helps to consolidate the habits learnt in childhood .

METHODOLOGY

This study is structured of several steps among which we can identify: surveys, interviews, gathering of information, analisis and evaluation of the results and making proposals.

Work is being carried out with population over 18 years old. A differentiation is made between, under 25 and over 25 years old. The reason for this segregation is that the work is carried out mainly with a young population who are at a stage of life characterized by experiencing lots of external stimuli that affect, in any way, in its way of thinking and this is reflected, in how they act.

The study is carried out mainly with people who are in the process of academic training (students) or just starting out in the work market, but not yet have a fully independent economic status. Some are still within the family unit and others,

although they are temporarily out of it (studying in different places where family unit is), their economic independence is not complete. So, we work with the economic factor, which has been often taken into account as a determinant or influential item in the decision making when putting in place some habits.

In the survey that is being done a list of 26 sayings related to feeding is included. They all were chosen at a random from those which remains in my heart.

The variables of sex, age, profession, place of birth and residence are used in order to study the differences (if they are) according to these categories. Likewise, the fact of living in a different place of birth provides the ability to observe, in this age, a different environment known so far and, therefore, the possibility of increasing the number of new stimuli experienced by this population.

Eight questions are added related to the knowledge and use of proverbs, the means by which they have been known, their perception of the usefulness of these sayings and an explanation of it is asked for.

It is asked to explain at least five of the sayings they know and also to indicate some variants of them or to add others which are not in the list offered. We would like to know whether they are able to refer the sayings in their speech but in other different contexts, as well.

Due to time limitations, this proposal will focus on the exposure of a small part of the work being done.

RATIONALE BEHIND THE WORK

The sayings are learned in operation, performance, and using mainly two senses: the sight (to be present at the time and perceive this regard the situation in which they act) and hearing. Both senses are organized in a complementary manner in our brain. With the other senses, and as a part in the way of organizing themselves and how the brain operates, we learn to know and understand the world around us, the reality we live.

Human brain is conceived as one organism alive, changing and adapting to new kinds of artifical signals (Doidge, 2008: 33). The same happens when we face situations that we have not experienced before, and we know only by reference

to other people or when we try new foods, cooked in a different way than we are accustomed. We incorporate them into our culinary universe. They are external stimuli that we perceive, internalize and give back to the outside (in one way or another) and so, we perceive as a normal/natural thing (Doidge, 2008: 296) the "cosmos" in which we are and to which we belong. We have the right tools which are useful to categorize even organize our reality. Sayings help us to do it and we use them according to our needs (no one starts a conversation in an elevator or friends saying "half a loaf is better than one". It is waited for the favorable situation arises, when appropriate, the association of meanings, to recover the unconscious that information and make it conscious). There stimuli that once apprehended and assimilated by repetition, become a place "latent" in our brain (our unconscious memory) and will draw on them when our conscious brain tell us that it is the right time for it. It is what happens with sayings.

When we distance ourselves physically the space we know, or come into contact with different cultures or simply perceive other ways of interpreting and understanding reality (even in our own environment), we continue to experience stimuli and we are constantly transforming the experiences of everyday life in the same way we transform our brain. For this reason, we intend to study human behavior that gives us working with sayings related to the brain, as a part of a complex adaptive system (Álvarez, 2011: 425) in which we take into account the individual, social, symbolic and ecological dimensions.

The individual dimension invites us to work with the habits, "routine behavior patterns". They act as a guide when making choices about certain aspects, which involves decision making, establishment of customs. (Alvarez, 2009) and the combination of conscious and unconscious dimension.

Social dimension allows us to deal with the visible aspects, in relation to the learning that the sayings and their application provide us in the context of food, and their extrapolation to other contexts.

Symbolic dimension introduces us to the knowledge of the meaning of the values and beliefs which are conveyed through the sayings.

Ecological dimension leads us to consider the influence that the media has acquired in the implementation of this form of learning, and the use we make of the tools acquired in this way on the surrounding environment knowledge.

If you change the means by which you receive stimuli, Do the perception you have of them change? Does our interpretation change, therefore? And, if so, does it change our way of returning back to the outside stimuli?

According to Doidge (Doidge, 2008: 301) about neuroplasticity and social rigidity, quoting Bruce Wexler (Brain and Culture, 2006), as we age, brain neuroplasticity declines, childhood is the stage in which the basis for all our perceptual habits and beliefs have been established (among many others), and tend to be reinforced throughout our life. Ageing process makes plasticity declines and, as a consequence, "it becomes increasingly difficult for us to change in response to the changing world we perceive". It demands a greater effort from us.

If they are "our" elder (grandparents, parents) who have the role of putting across information by using sayings, to what extent they give us a way to see / interpret "static" reality? And if so, why do we need to interpret the changing world in which we live and perceive as useful tools to understand?

What is the meaning of sayings: What previous generations learn; the mental structures, the static or flexible ones; The way in which way stimuli perceived from the outside world are returned; The way in which they translate them.

In addition to that, if the communication takes place in the family context (also changing today (Antón, 2001: 37) and/or friends, and returned in the same context, what allows this kind of communication, which is maintained in this way at the same time that it "rejuvenates" the "moment" when that relationship is established.

There are many questions that emerge and that we will try to clarify in this research.

APPROACHING UNDERSTANDING

In the following text we briefly show the analysis being done of some sayings.

We will take as an example the two most commonly used sayings, according to respondents:

1.-*A falta de pan, buenas son tortas* [Half a loaf is better than one; Beggars cant's be choosers]

2.-De lo que se come se cría

Firstly, we note that, while the group of adults explains the sayings that uses, some young people explain sayings that they "do not use" but know them and know their meaning.

"A falta de pan, buenas son tortas"

Most young people apply an interpretation of that saying to other context, to general situations not limited to food context. They mainly agree in this with the group of older people who do not limit their use to any context.

In the group "under 25" the term "comply", "settle for" along with "get by" and not "demand" is the most often repeated, while the adults use the words "replace", "to be content" and "to value".

The dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy of Language defines "conformar" as follows: "(Del lat. conformāre).1. tr. Ajustar, concordar algo con otra cosa. U. t. c. intr. y c. prnl.2. tr. Dar forma a algo.3. tr. Econ. Dicho de un banco: Diligenciar un cheque garantizando su pago.4. intr. Dicho de una persona: Convenir con otra, ser de su misma opinión y dictamen. U. m. c. prnl.5. prnl. Reducirse, sujetarse voluntariamente a hacer o sufrir algo por lo cual se siente alguna repugnancia.6. prnl. Darse por satisfecho.

Within the meaning 4, a relationship of equality or likeness is established by using the term "misma" (same). Whereby we could understand that young people "equate" two elements in terms of qualities. But the term "comply" is also used in a broader context, referred to "something one wants but one does not get" but without the feeling of frustration that could accompany such a situation. This leads us to conclude that the meaning 6 is closer to the interpretation they inferred to the term used: SATISFACTION.

They settle for it, because they feel satisfied with obtaining the last option. We understand that the second option meets the objective sought in the first one.

Consequently, the fourth meaning of the definition is also identified with the term used.

Other terms that are used: “Apañarte” (Diccionario RAE; Aceptación 7. tr. coloq. Poner solución o remedio a un asunto precariamente, con disimulo o por conveniencia.) con lo que tienes, “sin exigir” (Diccionario RAE; Aceptación 1. tr. Pedir imperiosamente algo a lo que se tiene derecho.)

“Sustituir”: 1. tr. Poner a alguien o algo en lugar de otra persona o cosa. MORF. conjug. c. construir.

“Contentar”: (Del lat. contentāre). 1. tr. Satisfacer el gusto o las aspiraciones de alguien, darle contento. 2. tr. Com. endosar. 3. prnl. Darse por contento, quedar contento. 4. prnl. Dicho de quienes estaban disgustados.

“Valorar”: 1. tr. Señalar el precio de algo. 2. tr. Reconocer, estimar o apreciar el valor o mérito de alguien o algo. 3. tr. valorizar (aumentar el valor de algo). 4. tr. Quím. Determinar la composición exacta de una disolución.

< 25 year old		>25 year old	
Conformarse	Igualdad Deseo Satisfacción Solucionar No tener derecho	En lugar de Gusto Satisfacer Contento Reconocer valor	Sustituir
Apañarse			Contentarse
No exigir			Valorar

The concepts and values that are acquired with the use of this proverb are similar as expressed by both groups, except that in the interpretation by the young group lies a feeling of "equality", equivalence or similarity for the two options given, where no involvement is observed of "suffering" to the acceptance of an alternative. In the group of elder people it is observed.

Following, to understand more clearly the difference in the association of the term "equality" by a group of respondents, we will define the context that sets the stage of life where they are: young or adult.

"Young" (RAE) 3. com. Person in youth.

"Youth": 5. f. Energy, vigour, freshness.

In different texts referring to this stage of life we find the following terms that define it: "Stage of changes, modifications, development, independence, different social relations, difficulties, efforts, searches, projects, etc."

“adulto”: (RAE): 1. adj. Llegado a su mayor crecimiento o desarrollo. Persona adulta. Animal adulto. U. t. c. s. 2. adj. Llegado a cierto grado de perfección, cultivado, experimentado. Una nación adulta. “3. adj. Zool. Dicho de un animal: Que posee plena capacidad reproductora.”

“edad adulta”: adulta.1. f. Aquella en que el organismo humano alcanza su completo desarrollo.

The use of the word "reached" could be interpreted as an end / completion of a stage. Among the terms associated with this stage of life we find: "full / fulness,

profession, concerns, permanent, lifelong, home, consolidations, tension, stability, expertise, effectiveness, self-fulfilment, balance".

In youth, the terms "energy" and "vigour" (associated with "cool" "freshness" as far as degree of intensity involves) are related to the ideas of changes, modifications, development, efforts, or searches, among others. On the other hand, it is associated to the adult the idea of target acquisition, "projects" established in the previous stage.

While it is true that both groups of people use similar terms to interpret meanings of something that at first appear to be "clear" and expressed in an "objective" way, as it is the standard of behaviour that is explicit in the saying. It can be appreciate a "subtle" shade of differentiation in the interpretation made of it because, while young people see its goals achieved by accepting a second option which is awarded the same qualities as the first, members of the older group choose make a change to achieve their goals.

"De lo que se come se cría"

It is shown that respondents relate food intake to the impact food have on health. They are a bit more precise and they indicate that the type of food it is eaten has an impact on our physical appearance and health.

They show that there is a link in between physical appearance and health. The use of the saying is also detected in different contexts to feed (related to the modus operandi and consequences of our actions: social norms), as seen in these two interpretations: M <"What you do to the people then they shall repay you, "M <"What you give is what you get"

The group under 25 reflects a sharp use of terms using expressions such as "the more you eat, the bigger you be", "what you give is what you get", "if you eat or act in a way ... ", "one is what one eats", "what you do to people then they will return", "we are what we eat". It could be inferred a greater focus on the immediate (action) that in time to come (consequence), while considering the important relationship between the two.

The group over 25, on the other hand, put more emphasis on things to come (consequence), highlighting the consequences, directly using the term impact (repercussion).

Both groups identify EAT = BE, while establishing a similarity between eating and modus operandi and between the latter and decision making.

EAT MODUS OPERANDI DECISION MAKING BEHAVIOUR	CONSEQUENCE REPERCUSSION (IMPACT)	TO BE PHISICAL APPEARENCE
RESPONSABILITY		

"Consequence": (RAE dictionary), (Del lat consequentia.) 0.1. f. Fact or event that continues or results from another. 2. f. Logical correspondence between the behavior of a person and the principles he professes. 3. f. Phil. Proposition follows from another or from others, as rigorous link, which admitted or denied the

premises, is inescapable admit or deny it. 4. f. Phil. Accordingly illation or link their premises. have out. 1. loc. verb. Have a result or bring a fact or event, or necessarily produce others.

"Effect": impact. (Del lat. Repercussio, -onis). 1. f. Action and effect of impact. 2. f. Fact have much resonance something.

"Impact" (Del lat repercutere; re and percutere, hurt, crash.). 1. intr. Rebounding (reverse or change direction). 2. foreword. Reverberate 3. intr. Said sound: Produce echo. 4. intr. Saying one thing: Transcending, cause effect on another. 5. tr. Med. P. us. Reject, repel, make a body fluid flowing back backward or backward.

Relationship established between food and health has always been present in the discourse of population. It is not a novelty. What has changed is the way of thinking about health. "The more you eat, the larger you are going to be." But it is not specified if the consequences of the acts are good or bad, positive or negative. We can think of this saying as the manifestation of a rule of behaviour, which reinforces the responsibility regarding the result of the actions we carry out on the decisions we take. (RAE Dictionary: "responsibility": 3. f charge or moral obligation arising from the possible mistake for someone else or determinado. 4 issue in Der f existing capacity in all active subject of law to recognize and accept the consequences.... a fact made freely.)

In both groups the idea of linking responsibility with actions and these with decision taking and impacts (consequences), with the difference being on the immediate concern (act) or future (impact, associated to the different age groups.

After this short approach to the analysis that is being carried out in such expressions of speech and behaviour, we are observing that the stimuli we receive from the outside world (life experience) are, in principle, the same for all people who share the same environment but which are internalized and returned to the outside differently. They are two ways of understanding the world, of interpreting the reality experienced daily.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Every time we use a saying not only do we "express" ideas but we are also "materializing" norms of behavior that help us to interpret the world's reality in which we develop our daily becoming, we are showing our way of dealing with others and with the environment around us, as well.

Our speech (interpretation tool) makes visible the way in which we act (stimuli we return to the outside) and that we use to show the way we are that both identifies us as individuals (person) and as a group.

Having received information (external stimuli) by the same means (friends or family context) and channel (oral transmission), each person "perceive" them in a different way.

Our brain receives in a different way depending on age, which is assimilated and projected back to the outside as a tool for interpreting reality "their way".

Not only we learn with sayings to categorize but also to identify, symbolize even to mean. "In a world of multiple possibilities and lack of criteria, the individuals need rules that guide and give meaning to their lives." (Antón, 2001: 33).

By using the term "age" we are referring to a temporary category with specific characteristics that defines it in relation to the time, not just at the individual level but also in the social one.

FUTURE WORK

A significant number of young people do not use the sayings (although, as it is emerge from the collected surveys, they really know them). Can we conclude that, on one hand, they judge the sayings as a "non useful tool" but, on the other hand, they indicate just the contrary.

By studying the person behavior of using sayings is important to take into account categories such as *awareness, individual, family, environment*.

By looking for the meaning we enter in a world of relationships "... through which human beings give meaning to their actions and to the world surrounding them" (Anton, 2012: 350).

Using the proverbs/sayings is a way in which we learn how to act and how to interact with others and with the environment in which we operate, as well.

If we use them consciously then we encourage in our social environment a picture in the way of acting that involves, at the same time, a learning to those who are around us.

It is in a local level as they are both produced and as consciously internalize the changes that take place in the world we live in. For this reason, it must be from the local point of view from where the coveted behavior changes demanded by the institutions are promoted as a way to prevent issues that degrade the environment around us, because it is culture which gives us the tools to carry it out.

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