

BILINGUALISM & MORAL JUDGMENT

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Extended Summary

Introduction. Recently the scientific literature suggests that the language (native or foreign) in which a dilemma is formulated, can influence moral judgment. The review focuses on the article by Albert Costa in 2014, it is a cross-cultural study conducted with different languages of the world, English, Spanish, Korean, French and Hebrew. Next, the review of the literature and the most outstanding findings will be presented.

Material. As for the material, the sources reviewed have been obtained from the PsycNet database through the library of the Universitat Jaume I, the search has been made based on two criteria; introducing the keywords bilingualism & moral judgment, and on the other hand, the sources quoted and cited have been followed by the article by Albert Costa.

Results. After examining the sources we have located a total of 11 central sources to the subject and 12 peripheral sources: As a main finding we emphasize that the moral judgment may be affected by the language in which the dilemma is formulated.

There are two traditional tests of measurement of moral judgment. Both were passed to all participants of the Costa study, Philippa Foot in (1978). In one of them, the tram test, a drawing appears, in it you can see a tram that goes to 5 people who are tied in a lane of the road, in another lane there is a person tied, and a person with a lever to divert the tram. In the other test, the bridge test, there is a tram that goes to 5 people who appear tied in a lane of the road and a bridge appears in which there is a heavy man who is given the option to push the participant to brake the tram and save the 5 people tied. In both cases, the participant must decide whether to sacrifice a person to save 5 (utilitarian) or inhibit (deontological). In the case of the bridge, the utilitarian decision is more aggressive (requires physical contact).

Moral judgment is driven by the interaction of two forces; Intuitive or automatic processes, which are driven by the emotional content of the given dilemma, and which support judgments that favor the essential rights of a person, or of oneself, one's own benefit (deontological judgments). Rational or controlled processes, which are driven by the conscious evaluation of possible outcomes, which favor the common good regardless of whether or not they violate a social norm (utilitarian judgments).

Before a moral dilemma we can give utilitarian, controlled answers that benefit the good of society or deontological, automatic responses that benefit one's own.

Subsequent and more specific investigations attribute differences in the choice of responses due to the effect of the foreign language, an increase in psychological distance and a reduction in the emotional response. That is, the use of a foreign language increases the utilitarian responses, (controlled processes that require cognitive resources), due to an increase in psychological

distance and a reduction in the emotional response. Participants when presented with the dilemma in a second language carry out a significantly higher percentage of utilitarian responses than when the dilemma is presented in their native language.

On the other hand, we find that the foreign language influences the moral judgment when the proposed action implies the violation of the social or moral norm. It has been observed that there are no differences of the language before the tram test (Corey et al., 2015). The participants made the utilitarian decisions in Spanish that in English when Spanish was the foreign language, but more utilitarian decisions in English that is Spanish when English was the foreign language (Costa et al., 2014).

Finally, in terms of the areas that are activated when we respond to a moral dilemma, we find; the C. Prefrontal medial, the Precúneo, the C. Cingulate posterior and the C. Angular bilateral.

The Prefrontal C. is an area of association that receives information from other brain areas to process information together and thus solve social problems in a more adaptive way. It is a kind of mediator that allows us to adjust our actions to various variables, as in this case, the costs-benefits of giving the lever, or moral rules.

The Precussion is responsible for integrating internal brain information with environmental information, it is also related to the capacity of simulation and imagination. (Memory)

The posterior cingulate is part of the limbic system so they have a role in emotions, motivational aspects and personal evaluation.

And the bilateral angular cortex; it has functions associated with reading, since together with area 22 and 40 they form the Wernike area which is responsible for understanding the language, the theory of the mind (putting oneself in the place of the other), executive control of behavior , and processing of sequences of actions.

Conclusions. In light of the current data we can say that; the language in which moral dilemmas are formulated influences their resolution. Emotional factors intervene in this process with respect to the level of violation of the norm. The medial Prefrontal C., the Precuneo, C. Posterior Cingulate and the bilateral Angular C. intervene in the resolution of moral judgments.

Future perspectives. Reviewing the literature we have found studies that point in a very general way to the influence of language in the field of advertising. We believe it is interesting that more specific investigations are carried out in the field, as well as in the field of economic decision-making.