What do you understand for X?

Célia Lúcia GOMES PESSANHA
LCC/CCH/UENF
Av. Alberto Lamego 2000
28015-620 Campos RJ Brazil
T: 55 22 27261589 / F: 55 22 27261589
Celiapessanha@aol.com

Adriana SOARES
UNIVERSIDADE GAMA FILHO
Mestrado em Psicologia
Rua Manuel Vitorino 625 Prédio CP
20748-900 Piedade Rio RJ Brasil
T: 55 21 22748407 F: 55 21 22748409
mespsi@ugf.br

This study approached the language and the thought under the cognitive perspective. We investigated the interaction, dependence, or independence of these cognitive processes, but above all J. Fodor's inatist presupposition of a "language of the thought." Such presupposition transcends the specific subject of the language and of the thought. Fodor (1975) affirms that it would exist in the human brain a structure that would take us to develop a formal system of linguistic registrations that would incorporate all of the universal properties of the language. This "language" would be the communication between the mental states and the structures of the thought. Therefore, it would allow us to do hypotheses regarding the knowledge that we want to acquire, and, still, to classify, and to classify it. This way, we elaborated an experimental situation in which we showed that children from 6 to 7 years (in the first school stage), are not capable to acquire real new concepts not belonging to the immediate universe of knowledge. In general terms, our results point that after the contextualization is notable the index of understanding of the new concept for the children. Although this concept is distant of their cognitive universe, it is significant for them, because they are part of real events of their lives. Partly, we corroborated the theory of Fodor that we acquired new concepts starting from the formulation of hypotheses. However, unlike Fodor that affirms that the innate mental structures are responsible for the acquisition of new concepts, Jean Piaget sustains that such concepts are acquired through the individual's interaction with the middle in that he is always not having any innate determinant. In this case, the categorization of new concepts involved a mental representation purely abstract, as foresaw Fodor, however, sustaining bonds cultural, historical and social in the understanding and apprehension of the new concepts, as announced Piaget. We believed that the results demonstrate that the contextualization of the new concept in the children's cognitive universe is the first step for a significant learning.