

Vulgarity: Such an ugly word!

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Are Cubans vulgar? How and why has this evil spread so much in a society that precisely professes quite the opposite? What should we do in the face of a phenomenon that is increasingly growing?

It's true, vulgarity has "gained ground", and great part of the population worries about it, thus I am answering one of the first questions.

However, it's a reality that has grown like weed, and a look at the issue does not find a quick solution.

Ways of dressing and extravagant hairstyles; song lyrics, video clips and unpleasant spots; obscene language at any time; indelicate gestures that are not focused on a certain population group, age or sector, are some of the manifestations, which we see across the country.

Literature is full of phrases on the topic. Writers of all time did not leave it in oblivion.

Home and school: an inseparable acting

Many parents suffer the phenomenon at home. Isa, a blogger from Cuba's western province of Pinar del Rio, claimed that many of them "complain that their teenage and young children are increasingly disobedient and sometimes tend to show a vulgar attitude in their daily behavior", and added: "Some fathers and mothers are wonderful workers, who spent more hours in their labor concerns than in the attainment of their correct formation and did not convey the security and understanding their descendants needed".

However, all this is true; nevertheless, it starts from the criterion that those families are not vulgar.

What basis does a child have at home, when he lives surrounded by bad manners, obscene language and other deplorable behaviors, which distance him/her from a safe and happy childhood?

"The chains of life", thus I call such situations, because it is about behaviors and attitudes that are passed on from generation to generation, therefore, it is complicated to carry out an adequate educational work in those contexts.

No matter how much the school does, even the so-called factors from the community—that is, members of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) and neighbors—, the child lives in a hostile atmosphere, which does not contribute to his/her formation. Hence, he/she needs a differentiated care from teachers and school executives, on the basis of an early and accurate diagnosis.

Either at home or in school, examples are essential. Should mother, father or the teacher shout; should they gesticulate strongly; should they smoke, dress incorrectly, tell lies, are not honest; children will exactly do the same.

"It's highly unpleasant to see how a student replies to the teacher or to his/her own parents impolitely and uses that street slang as an ordinary language—Isa stressed—. Manners to speak, to sit at a table, to address an adult, and to keep a good appearance and bearing, among other details, are cultivated since the first years of the child's life".

A call to take into account

Vulgarity is not an exclusive phenomenon of Cuba, although, of course, it hurts us a lot and we suffer it in public spaces every day. It has been present in any time; however, it has become more evident in recent years.

Its manifestations are associated with the process of the loss of values that

—according to specialists and researchers— increased after the so-called “Special Period”, when many Cuban families focused their eyes on aspects linked to economy and survival.

Army General Raul Castro Ruz, President of the Councils of State and Ministers, made a wake-up call in July 2013. At that time, he said: “We have perceived with pain throughout more than twenty years the increased deterioration of moral and civic values, such as honesty, decency, shame, decorum, integrity and sensitivity to others’ problems”.

After commenting a large number of negative behaviors, which we coexist with, he highlighted that “It’s unacceptable to equate vulgarity with modernity, sloppiness or negligence with progress. Living in society entails, firstly, accepting rules that preserve respect for others’ rights and decency”.

“(…) Behaviors previously associated with marginality, such as shouting loudly in the street, indiscriminate use of obscene language and sloppy talk, have become incorporated into the behavior of more than a few citizens, regardless of their educational level or age”.

At the same time, he remarked the role of teachers and parents. “It’s known that home and school make up the sacred binomial of the individual’s formation according to society, and these acts represent not only social damage, but also serious cracks of a family and school nature”.

On the issue, teacher Ruth Vargas, from Guantanamo, with vast experience in the sector, pointed out that “Vulgarity is something undesirable, denigrates who expresses it and characterizes that personality. We watch it with sadness in schools, in the relationship among educators and students. Since the child begins to speak, he/she must be taught, but the best method is the personal example of everyone around him/her”.

So, the fight against vulgarity is amongst us and, of course, the media should help bring it to its minimum expression too.

Translated by Jorge Mesa Benjamin / Cubasi Translation Staff
