Ethnopragmatic Perspectives on Language of Happiness and Success: Leadership and Personal Development Accounts on Instagram

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In my judgment, the Dissertation entitled

Ethnopragmatic Perspectives on Language of Happiness and Success:

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meets recognized scholarly standards for the Degree of M.A. in English

Applied Linguistics and is, therefore, ready to proceed to Examination.

Abstract

This study addresses the language used on images and captions on Instagram publications, on profiles of leadership and personal development. It consists of the analysis and comparison of data gathered in two corpora from publications of five authors in two periods—May 2015 and May 2018—from the point of view of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage.

The research argues that primes and other parts of speech related to emotions and sensations influence the number of likes each publication receives. On the other hand, it states that language has changed from one period to another, as an argument for the increase in the number of likes. Following the approach to language proposed by Anna Wierzbicka, it gives an ethnopragmatic perspective on language of happiness and success, two key concepts in leadership and personal development profiles, and it classifies data according to the categories for primes established by Cliff Goddard. Specifically, the analysis is focused on primes, along with nouns, adjectives, and some verbs, which are compared from one period to another, taking into account their relevance in coordination with the number of likes. It shows that specific linguistic choices and their combination are determinant for the increase of likes in publications on Instagram.

Keywords: primes, likes, ethnopragmatics, social media, Instagram happiness, success, motivational language.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Communication and Social Media

In the last two decades, the way people communicate has changed. Society has experienced a shift in the communicative process after centuries of oral communication, the use of written communication in various physical mediums afterward, along with the telephone from the 19th century on. The use of the Internet expanded throughout the world, and apart from using the tools it offered for business and government, regular people started to employ it to convey information, to transmit messages to one another. This change of behavior went from the chat rooms era that allowed direct written communication between people and the use of emojis—faces that expressed feelings—to the development of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, among others, which are primarily used today. This shift involved not only a new way of communication but also a direct implication of people in other people's lives, just a mouse click away. Nowadays, computer technology changes very fast, and its users are stimulated and challenged by its boundless interactive environments (Baumer and van Rensburg, 2011).

This new way of communication is called Computer-mediated communication (hereinafter CMC), which, as stated by Susan Herring is "communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers" (1996:1). For text-based CMC, there are two ways of receiving the message, either immediately—synchronous CMC—or later—asynchronous CMC. However, CMC includes any digital communication. In this regard, some publications have offered alternatives, such as "digital media" and "new media" language. However, like Herring, Stein and Virtanen state, neither the term "new media" nor "digital media" is accurate, as the first lacks a historical perspective, while the second is too broad, and includes video games and communication devices (2013). They offer an alternative, "digital discourse" (Thurlow and Mroczek, 2011), which for the present research is more accurate, as it makes clear that language use is in focus.

The use of digital discourse has affected not only the form of communication but also its content and quality. With the growth of social media, "researchers are being presented with an unprecedented resource of personal discourse" (Schwartz et al., 2013:1). Apart from studies at a linguistic level, such as politeness in language and language accuracy, computational linguists have addressed "prediction tasks such as sentiment analysis, authorship attribution, emotion detection, and stylometrics" (Schwartz et al., 2013:1).

Nowadays, digital discourse, accompanied by images, is used not only for dialogue between people, but it also has an active commercial component, using all the marketing tools at hand to persuade, to make people buy a product or a service. This persuasion is done through

language, the use of specific types of lexical items that, combined, reach their goal on every social media, including Instagram.

Instagram started as a photo-oriented social networking service and, at present, belongs to Facebook. It enables users to upload videos, apart from pictures, and apply to them a selection of digital filters. It was launched in October 2010, and although it was exclusive for iOs, it was also released for Android in 2012. According to Statista–The Statistics Portal, in January 2013 it registered 90 million users, while in 2015 it already had 300 million. As of June 2018, the number had increased to nearly 1 billion monthly active users. This number positions itself behind Facebook (1.4 billion) and before Twitter (68 million) and Pinterest (250 million). It has 120 million active users, and daily users as of 2018 stood at 500 million. The ten leading countries based on the number of users (in millions) as of January 2019 were:

- United States: 120
- India: 75
- Brazil: 69
- Indonesia: 62
- Turkey: 38
- Russia: 37
- Japan: 27
- United Kingdom: 24
- Mexico: 22
- Germany: 20

Another graphic on Statista–The Statistics Portal shows the percentage of U.S. adults who use Instagram as of January 2018, by educational background, and the results are relevant: 42% of users have a College education or upper.

Several researchers have studied Instagram in many fields, such as personality, narcissism in self-promotion (Jang Ho Moon et al. 2016); feelings, such as loneliness, and comparison to other social media (Pittman and Reich, 2016), self-criticism and emotional response to Instagram feedback (Jackson and Luchner, 2017); language of self-harm (Moreno et al., 2015); contextual age and motives of use (Sheldon and Bryant, 2015) and others oriented to tool of language for social media: hashtags (Giannoulakis and Tsapatsoulis, 2016), and others. However, little has been done to link the language with the number of likes. Specifically, there is a field that has not been studied extensively yet, in which language is used on Instagram that could give ground for study in this area. It is the profiles of people that talk about leadership and personal development. Contrary to other Instagram profiles that are more focused on pictures,

these provide highly valuable written material of what is called motivational language or the language of success, which gives ground for research.

Authors behind these leadership and personal development profiles, as leaders of their businesses, form one of the areas that have benefited the most from the use of Social media, first on Twitter and Facebook, and in recent years on Instagram. Apart from the activity performed through their books, conferences, or seminars, what they write on Social Media makes them have more people following them, and like their publications. They have influenced many individuals around the world, not only helping them become better and more successful but also making them even follow the same carrier. Apart from images, this was specially performed through the specific use of language and its persuasive effect. "People speak with words, they think with words, they 'do things' with words; to a significant extent, words shape people's lives. Arguably, they also contribute significantly to shaping world affairs" (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2014:2).

The Instagram profiles studied in this research stand out by using motivational language typically loaded with words with positive connotations, primes and other lexical items related to the ideas of happiness and success, to reaching the maximum potential and to creating the best version of oneself. At first glance, this type of language has a persuasive effect on the readers, as it creates in them expectations about living a happy and successful life one click away. However, although publications are normally motivational and focused on happiness and success, not all of them get the same number of likes, and this variable changes both within the same period, and from one period to another.

Therefore, considering this initial presumption about the language focused on happiness and success, the center of the present research will be on primes and parts of speech (nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and pronouns), their type, frequency, and the importance they have as persuasive tools in determining the number of likes in each publication. Departing from the number of likes each publication received within two periods—May 2015 and May 2018—it is the interest of this study to analyze the relationship between the language used and the concepts of happiness and success behind the primes and other parts of speech, the relevance that lexical items have by themselves for this purpose, their use in context, and to find out if there is a direct relationship between them.

1.2. Thesis Statement and Objectives

The literature has addressed linguistic issues on many Computer media platforms, such as blogs, email, chats, instant messaging, text messaging, mobile phone communication, forums, and in the last years the language on platforms such as Facebook or Twitter. However, it has not addressed the type of language Instagram uses in leadership and personal development accounts, and how it

evolved in time. Therefore, a research project on this subject will help deepen the research on Social Media language.

The main objectives of this research are:

- To find out if the language used in the pictures and captions of profiles specialized on leadership and personal development has changed over time.
- To search for evidences that primes (NSM) influence the number of likes a publication receives.
- To see if there is a direct relation between the parts of speech related to happiness and success used in publications and the number of likes of each publication on Instagram.
- To discover what has been the tendency of language use and the predominant type of language in publications.

1.3. Hypothesis

Taking into account the objectives stated above, the hypothesis for this research is: when comparing language on Instagram publications of several leadership and personal development authors, there is a direct relationship between the use of primes, combined with some parts of speech—nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and pronouns—, and the number of likes each publication receives in 2015 and 2018. This implies language change from one period to another, considering the number of likes has grown considerably.

1.4. Theoretical Model and Variables

Apart from determining the relevance of the data for the study quantitatively, the model that will be used to analyze primes is the classification of primes linked to emotions and sensations by Goddard, and an adapted version of the same will be used for the parts of speech.

The model presents the following classes:

1. Personal and social concepts
2. Mental and sensation concepts
3. Concepts related to feelings and quality of feelings
4. Temporal elements
5. Concepts expressing events and actions

For the research, the independent variable will be the language used in publications, while the dependent will be the number of likes each publication receives.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Persuasive Communication on Social Media

Social media (hereinafter SM) is used for communication and, as varied as the communicative act can be, language use on Instagram serves also the purpose of persuasion. Apart from image—which is not the objective of this research—text in leadership and personal development profiles is essential, because it gives ground for study in persuasive communication and language of success (motivational language). Words stand out attention, and the use of specific lexical units on the image together with the caption text serves a specific purpose: to motivate the readers and make them reach a mindset oriented toward success, and act accordingly to make it real.

In G. R. Miller's (1980) words, persuasive communication is "any message that is intended to shape, reinforce, or change the responses of another, or others" (Stiff and Mongeau, 2016:12). This definition is broader than the traditional one of the same term, as the word *response* "reflects his concern that persuasion should consider outcomes beyond attitudes and attitude change" (Stiff and Mongeau, 2016:5). These persuasive outcomes include the source, emotions, beliefs, behavioral intentions and behaviors. Therefore, in all cases, a persuasive message needs to comply with the audience's wants and needs, since arousing their desires and imagination involves exploiting existing beliefs, attitudes and values rather than introducing completely new ones (Jowett and O'Donnell, 1992). To persuade, the three main ingredients proposed by Aristotle and widely used today in rhetorical strategies are *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos.* The first has to do with personality and stance, the second, with argumentation and rationality, whilst the third is about emotion. Language used on SM comprise all of the three elements Aristotle proposed, although personal development and leadership accounts on Instagram publications include more of argumentative and rational texts, as well as text that appeal to emotion.

Although the main aim on Instagram is the publication of images, text has become more and more important. Therefore, one of the ways in which persuasion effect can be assessed on this SM is the number of likes a publication receives. In the present research, this is particularly the "response" that Miller included as the object of change of a message. It is the most direct response, as it appeals directly to emotions, beliefs, behavioral intentions and behaviors, through words. The number of likes will be one of the variables of the present research.

Text on Instagram appears in three possible places: On the image that is published, normally with a background picture that may or may not have to do with text; as a caption, which is the description of the image, and usually comes either as a repetition of the text on the image, as a comment of the image, or as a personal reflection on a certain subject; and as follower's

comments, normally about the picture. This research project will focus on the language used on the first two varieties of text, the one on the image and the one of the caption, together.

There is one feature of texts on SM that is frequently used in publications, as it facilitates finding content of a specific type as a user. It is called hashtag and consists of a keyword that comes preceded by a number sign "#". By clicking on it or searching for a specific hashtag, the user has access to open content, that is, many other profiles and publications that have used that keyword preceded by the "#" sign, which means the content is somehow related. The hashtag use did not begin on Instagram but on Twitter, another SM platform. However, for the purpose of this research, hashtags will not be analyzed.

On Instagram, texts used on captions, either long or short, normally have a personal component, that is, something that talks directly to the reader. It may say something related to the published image, it might further develop or repeat the idea that is on the image, or say something completely different, such as a personal thought about a certain topic, normally something in trend. Other captions have to do with a contest made on the profile or something related to the product or service that is being announced. It is this type of text on captions, together with the one on the images, that will be the focus of this research, as *a priori* there seems to be a relation between the lexical items that are used in publications and the number of likes, as a result of the type of language that is used and the persuasive effect lexical elements have on the reader.

2.2. Foundational Concepts and Components of "Success"

Social media characterizes also by its relation to the topic of happiness and success. The fact that most of what people share is related to image and text that pretend to "show" and increase the well-being of people, orients the language towards the use of positive words and syntactic structures. However, what lays behind the transmission of happiness and success through language? What do people understand by success?

When people think about success, the general belief is that it involves mostly material things, such as the home of their dreams, the best car, clothes, travel, or a job they love that allows them to afford the previous ones. Many also consider it a success to have a happy marriage and a lovely family with whom to get along. Success in those terms is recognized as a reasonable desire for life, as it can be assessed by the image one project on others, not so much on oneself. In general terms, success for this category of people is measured by what others can see. However, there are some people that think about success in broader terms. Apart from the material aspect of success—which they normally consider to be a consequence rather than the objective—they seek other things, such as peace of mind, emotional balance, physical and spiritual well-being that comes from dedicating time to oneself or quality time with close family

and friends. The combination of the material and immaterial aspect of success would make for many people, a happy life.

Whether people perceive it one way or the other, everybody looks for it at some point in their lives. People seek happiness, and SM portrays it also through success. In this regard, the profiles analyzed in this research are focused on leadership and personal development, two key concepts that imply success at many levels. However, although it is possible to transmit the idea of success only through personal example, it is more common to talk about it, that is, to use words to nurture in the audience the desire for it, more than before, to motivate people to set goals, reach them, get out of their comfort zone, and attain their maximum value.

Although not specifically in these profiles, research has been already made on a concept that is called the Motivating Language Theory. Motivating Language (hereinafter ML) "helps leaders to better connect with their followers and improves follower and firm well-being" (Mayfield and Mayfield, 2018:1). The concept was first developed by professor Jeremiah Sullivan "as a communicative path to enhance follower motivation and related outcomes through mindful and strategic leader speech" (Mayfield and Mayfield, 2018:9). There are three dimensions of ML that represent the leader to follower speech, and are mostly used in practical terms in businesses and leadership environments:

- ✓ Meaning-making—giving significance and cultural guidance to work
- ✓ Empathetic—sharing human bonding at work
- ✓ Direction-giving—dispelling ambiguity and transparently sharing work expectations

Meaning-making language or locutionary speech transmits organization mental models and informs the employee of his role in relation to the objectives of the organization (Mayfield, Mayfield and Sharbrough, 2014). It can be informal and symbolic and it has to do with the critical psychological state of experienced meaningfulness of the work (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Miner, 2005; Sullivan, 1988). This language can be used both in formal and informal environments, and usually has to do with the culture and values of the organization. It can be expressed through stories and metaphors in order to be easily understood. Meaning-making language clarifies organizational beliefs, shared mental models, emphasizes stakeholder importance, and clarifies positive future directions. Applied to the language used on SM in the target profiles of this research, it can be the information given about whom the profile and publications are addressed to, using strategic words to express it, so that the person that is reading (the follower) would feel identified with the message.

Empathetic language or illocutionary language is used more in oral language and it is the leader's ability to walk in another's shoes, to connect emotionally with a follower, that is, to express humanity to an employee. Empathetic language expresses appreciation of internal and

external stakeholders, and manifests sensitivity for internal and external stakeholders needs. In Instagram publications, this type of language is expressed through the use of pronouns such as *you* and *I*, to express an example of the author and then a message that intends to persuade through the closeness with the readers, to make them feel understood, to motivate them to reach their potential, but through a personal experience of the author, something he or she has lived. This aspect is predominant in leadership and personal development profiles.

Direction-giving language or perlocutionary speech is most frequent in leader-follower communication and contemporary management motivational theory (Sullivan, 1988). It is a direct speech and consists of the presentation of clear and transparent goal, detailing rewards and delegating responsibilities. It is frequently used in oral language, rather than in written discourse. Direction-Giving Language explicates organizational goals, energizes goal attainment, sets objectives, dispels ambiguity, and links rewards to organizational goals. Although this is difficult to transmit through SM, one of the aspects is the advices the authors give on specific subjects, in order to help the followers achieve their goals.

The three types of language conforming the MLT are linked to a body part that plays an important role in transmitting the correct message: Hands refer to direction-giving language that clarifies goals and transparently dispels ambiguity. Heart refers to empathetic language, which imparts genuine caring to others. And spirit refers to meaning-making language, enriching a follower's work experience with significance and mutual values (Mayfield and Mayfield, 2018).

Figure 1. Graphical representation of motivating language's three facets and their aspects (In Mayfield and Mayfield, 2018)
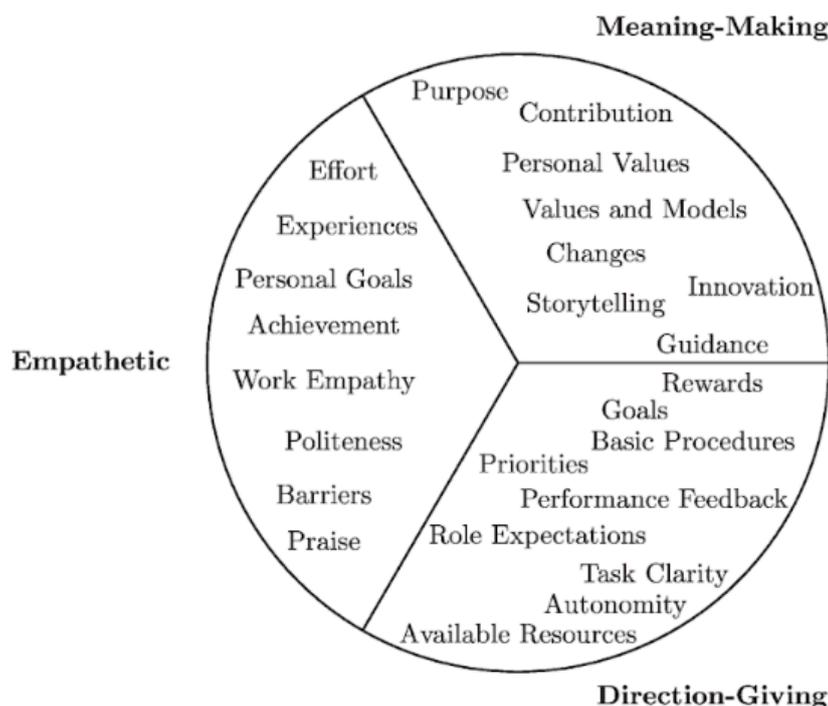
Although this MLT applies more to the real organizational level, and is analyzed more in the oral context, as it does not analyze words per se, but attitudes and ways of transmitting information from leader to employee, it will serve the purpose of categorization of language for the aim of this research project.

2.3. The Study of Meaning and Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM)

It is not possible to talk about lexical elements—language of happiness and success, and persuasion—without talking about meaning and context. Why is meaning important? Language encodes concepts and linguistics can help readers understand how this is done. This understanding can be achieved through the study of meaning and the use of language in context (Gladkova and Romero-Trillo, 2014). In the same direction, Anna Wierzbicka states that language itself is an instrument for conveying meaning, and studying language without reference to it is like studying road signs from the point of view of their physical properties, without taking into account what they convey, what their significance is in practical terms (Wierzbicka, 1996).

> Semantics can have an explanatory value only if it manages to 'define' (or explicate) complex and obscure meanings in terms of simple and self-explanatory ones. If a human being can understand any utterances at all (someone else's or their own) it is only because these utterances are built, so to speak, out of simple elements which can be understood by themselves (Wierzbicka, 1996:11-12).

In this regards, "language is not independent of the rest of cognition, and . . . meaning underlies language, not the other way around" (Wierzbicka, 1996:21).

> The "absolute order of understanding" depends on semantic complexity. There are concepts that cannot be understood without first understanding more simple and basic concepts. For example, a concept like 'promise' cannot be understood without understanding the concept of 'say', because 'promise' is built on 'say' (Wierzbicka, 1996:10).

Meaning can be analyzed through a technique called Natural Semantic Metalanguage (hereinafter NSM), a concept first developed under the name of Lingua Mentalis, by Anna Wierzbicka, where she studied the semantics of natural language. Later, researcher Cliff Goddard came up with the Natural Semantic Metalanguage title and from then on, research on this area is referred to as NSM. It is "a contrasted and well-documented technique for semantic and ethnopragmatic analysis" (Gladkova and Romero-Trillo, 2014:141), a set of words that represent the basic core concepts common to al languages, that is sixty-five semantic universals. These are very useful in cross-cultural communication. The first researcher in developing this concept was Leibniz (Wierzbicka, 1996), talking about what he called the alphabet of human thoughts, as a number of basic ideas or concepts that can be found in all languages. He claimed that all human beings were born with the capacity of understanding them.

In this regard, and for the analysis of our corpora, first we have to understand what are these basic ideas or concepts out of which one can build more complicated concepts. Semantic primes are single words with equivalents in all or most languages, using English components. The concept of "primitives" or "semantic primes" was first developed by Anna Wierzbicka, in a need to go at the core of meaning, to identify those concepts with meaning that cannot be defined further. In words of Wierzbicka, "the key to a rigorous and yet insightful talk about meaning lies in the notion of semantic primitives (or semantic primes)" (1996:9). The study of semantic primes is part of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage theory that "combines the philosophical and logical tradition in the study of meaning with a typological approach to the study of language, and with broadly based empirical cross-linguistic investigations" (Wierzbicka, 1996:23).

But what are primes and why are they important? "Primes constitute the core of human lexicon and can be used to explicate more complex meanings" (Gladkova and Romero-Trillo, 2014:141). They are concepts that cannot be further explained or divided in other units of meaning. Although it is all about language, this approach can be considered a scientific approach to language, as one can make an analogy between the use of primes as basic elements from which all the others can combine to make complex structures, with the elements in chemistry that combined result in innumerable options and substances, or the basic colors that make others by combination. The list of semantic primes started with fourteen elements in the beginning and, as mentioned previously, the present list is made up of sixty-five primes. The process of adding more primes to the first list was made progressively, during years of research and testing of words in many languages, to see whether the meaning changed when translated into another language, or whether it remained the same. Those who universally kept the meaning and could no longer be given a further explication in English and in the other languages were added to the list.

Apart from the semantic primes, the NSM theory developed another classification of elements, called "semantic molecules," which referred apparently to elements present in all languages (e.g.: men, women, and children). However, many semantic molecules are language-specific, but it appears that a limited number, perhaps 20 or so, may be universal or near-universal (Goddard, 2011:72).

A concept that is strongly related to the one of NSM is 'ethnopragmatics', which, in simple terms, is understanding discourse in cultural context. The term 'ethnopragmatics,' as defined by Goddard refers to "explanations of speech practices which begin with culture-internal ideas i.e., with the shared values, norms, priorities, and assumptions of the speaker, rather than with any presumed universals of pragmatics (Goddard, 2003).

> What makes ethnopragmatics distinctive is that it has faced these problems squarely and
> developed solutions based on research findings about simple cross-translatable words.
> Ethnopragmatics uses two analytical tools . . . semantic explications and cultural scripts.

Semantic explications are explanatory paraphrases of word meanings (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2014). Semantic explications enable us to access insider understandings of words and expressions and to present them in the form of cross-translatable paraphrases. Cultural scripts are representations of cultural norms, attitudes and tacit understandings (Wierzbicka, 2002a, 2003, 2015; Goddard, 2009b). Cultural scripts are about shared understandings and expectations. Obviously not everyone in a given discourse community necessarily agrees with or conforms to such shared understandings, but the claim is that they are a kind of interpretive backdrop to everyday interaction. They too can be formulated in simple cross-translatable words (Goddard, 2017:56).

To use a simple and standardized metalanguage, which is presented by the ethnopragmatic perspective, is to work with precision and it allows digging deep into the language of happiness and success on Instagram.

Table 1. Semantic primes (English exponents), grouped into related categories
(In Gladkova and Romero-Trillo, 2014)

I, YOU, SOMEONE, SOMETHING~THING, PEOPLE, BODY	substantives
KIND, PART	relational substantives
THIS, THE SAME, OTHER~ELSE	determiners
ONE, TWO, MUCH~MANY, LITTLE~FEW, SOME, ALL	quantifiers
GOOD, BAD	evaluators
BIG, SMALL	descriptors
KNOW, THINK, WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR	mental predicates
SAY, WORDS, TRUE	speech
DO, HAPPEN, MOVE, TOUCH	actions, events, movement, contact
BE (SOMEWHERE), THERE IS, HAVE (SOMETHING), BE (SOMEONE/SOMETHING)	location, existence, possession, specification
LIVE, DIE	life and death
WHEN~TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT	time
WHERE~PLACE, HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE	space
NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF	logical concepts
VERY, MORE	intensifier, augmentor
LIKE~AS~WAY	similarity

2.4. Success and Happiness

For a long time, anthropologists, psychologists and professionals from other varied fields have studied the topic of happiness. As something that is immaterial, happiness has been on the table, and definitions have been given to a word that is general as a concept, but not universal as a term and as how is interpreted, because there could be as many definitions of it as people on earth. As a concept pertaining to the field of emotion, it is not easy to give it a meaning that could be understood in any language. In this regards, Goddard and Ye state, "Extensive cross-linguistic research has demonstrated that there are no precise lexical semantic universals in the domain of emotion, and that the specific meanings of the emotion words of any language are often heavily 'culturally coloured'" (Goddard and Ye, 2016:2).

Researchers succeed in developing scientific methods for studying subjective well-being and the scientific study of subjective well-being is now poised to grow into a major scholarly and applied discipline (Diener, Lucas & Oshii 2002:64 in Goddard and Ye, 2016:2).

Present society is experiencing a "success and happiness fever" that can be seen in advertising, magazines, media, and especially on SM, which presents perfection, an ideal life, which in many people's minds is true happiness. In words of Sissela Bok (2010), "Not since antiquity have there been such passionate debates as those taking place today about contending visions of what makes for human happiness" (in Goddard and Ye, 2016:3).

But is language relevant to happiness and success? Can one perceive happiness and success through reading or listening to something? Language is determinant in the way humans get access to feelings and thoughts. However, research on this subject has been made always on the side of self-reports, asking people how they understand emotional concepts, how they lived them, what is the definition they give to certain terms or concepts related to emotional feelings. Although what has been done so far is of great value and has helped understand the way people perceive certain emotional concepts, such as success, happiness, pain, etc., research on the linguistic side of this matter (Wierzbicka, Goddard, Ye, and others) are more than needed, as all self-reports are transmitted through language. Furthermore, people express their feelings about a certain event in their native language, and differences between two people explaining their feelings about the same event in two different languages can be significant. "The way people interpret their own emotions depends, to some extent at least, on the lexical grid provided by their native language" (Wierzbicka, 1999:26; cf. Besemeres, 2002; Pavlenko, 2005, 2006, in Goddard and Ye, 2016:4).

But how can one understand and find out if lexical elements have a persuasive effect on the follower from one period to another? Does the word have that capacity of persuasion by itself? When talking about language of success and language used in marketing and SM, there are single lexical elements that stand out, and single words are used to persuade, as the image of a brand or an advertising campaign. However words always belong to a context or make reference to a broader idea, identity or object.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants and Design

Choosing the participants was the first step that allowed gathering and analyzing data for this project. As there are many leadership and personal development accounts on Instagram, for this study, five accounts were used. These belong to well-known authors and speakers on leadership and personal development from the United States of America and Canada: Robin Sharma, Brendon Burchard, Bob Proctor, Brian Tracy, and Jack Canfield.

The reason for choosing authors from the USA, and not from other countries is because people that first commercially addressed these subjects were mainly from that country. Personal development as an area of study grew in the 20th century linked to areas such as Psychology (Alfred Adler, Carl Jung, Daniel Levinson, Daniel Goleman), Education (Arthur Chickering and many university organizations), Work (Abraham Maslow) and Leadership. Other notable American ancestors of the Personal development movement were: Andrew Carnegie, Napoleon Hill, and Earl Nightingale. However, it was from the last part of the 20th century that it experienced significant growth, producing more material, with the support of digitalization and the development of Social Media.

Robin Sharma— As his webpage describes him, Robin Sharma "is one of the world's premier speakers on Leadership and Personal Mastery." Born in Canada in 1965, former professor and lawyer, he has coached many well-known organizations around the world for more than 20 years now. These organizations range from Nike, GE, Microsoft, or FedEx to Yale University, HP, Oracle, and NASA, to mention a few. He is also the author of many best-selling books, such as *The Leader Who Had No Title*, *The Mont Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*, or his newest publication *The 5 a.m. Club*, and his social media posts, including Facebook and Instagram, reach over six hundred million people a year all around the world. His books have been translated into many languages, in which they have also become bestsellers.

Brendon Burchard was born in Montana, USA, and at the age of 19, an accident made him think about the essential things in life, which have guided them to research in psychology and leadership. He is now considered the world's leading high-performance coach, according to Success Magazine and Oprah.com and one of the most-watched, quoted and followed personal development trainers in history. He has developed successful online-courses and video series and is a #1 *New York Times*, #1 *Wall Street Journal*, #1 Amazon and #1 *USA Today* best-selling author. His books include, among others, *The Motivation Manifesto: 9 Declarations to Claim Your Personal Power*, *The Charge*, *Life's Golden Ticket* and his latest book *High Performance Habits: How Extraordinary People Become That Way*, which debuted as Wall Street Journal Bestseller.

Bob Proctor was born in 1934 and is an American author, motivational speaker, and success coach. He owned nineteen companies specializing in personal development, which provided seminars, books, programs, and one-to-one coaching to clients. He has written several books, including *You Were Born Rich*, *The ABCs of Success*, and *The Art of Thinking: Change Your Mindset, Change Your Life*. Currently, his main activity is performed at the Proctor Gallagher Institute, which provides products, services, and events that aim to educate and empower their audience, working mainly with thoughts, through words, within the prosperity

mentality. According to his webpage description, Proctor "is considered the world's foremost expert on the human mind."

Brian Tracy is a Canadian-American motivational public speaker and self-development author born in 1944. In his own words, his main goal is to help people achieve personal and business goals faster and easier. In his journey, he has consulted more than 1,000 companies and addressed more than 5,000,000 people around the world in 5,000 talks and seminars. He has studied, research and written in the fields of economics, history, business, philosophy, and psychology. He has written and produced many audio and video learning programs, some of which have been translated into more than 20 languages. He offers services in personal development, sales and business training, time management, leadership training, book writing, and public speaking.

He is the author of more than seventy books that have been translated into dozens of languages. Among his bestseller are *Maximum Achievement*; *Goals!: How to Get Everything You Want Faster Than You Ever Thought Possible*; *Eat That Frog!*; *Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life*.

Jack Canfield is an American author born in 1944. He is the creator of Chicken Soup for the Soul, a collection of books, and a franchise specialized in inspirational anthologies that sold over 123 million books. Canfield is also a motivational speaker, corporate trainer, and entrepreneur. As described on his webpage, he is specialized in creating peak performance for entrepreneurs, corporate leaders, managers, sales professionals, corporate employees, and educators. He is specialized in success and dedicated many years to find out what makes successful people different. He is a Harvard graduate with a Master's Degree in psychological education and one of the earliest champions of peak-performance. His most recent bestseller is *The Success Principles: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*. Apart from the collection *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, he has written many others that have been bestseller.

3.2. Procedure: Corpora Compilation

In order to be able to develop the practical part of this research, we needed to compile the corpora, as the focus is on the comparison of the language of two periods. To compile the corpora, we followed a method of copy/paste of the text on the image on Instagram and the caption on the same publication. Whenever we refer to the text of a publication, it includes both texts. The texts belong to five profiles on leadership and personal development.

As for the number of words in each corpus, it was not determined from the beginning but was the result of the compilation of words all the publications gathered in May 2015 and May 2018, respectively. The initial goal was to compare language change from one period to the

other, with a span of three years, to see changes and relation to the concepts of success and happiness.

3.3. Data Analysis Methodology

For the analysis of data and the discussion of results, a quantitative research was undertaken. In it, statistics were extracted about the number of words of each corpus, the number of publications, and the frequency of use of primes, nouns, adjectives, verbs, pronouns, and adverbs in each period. This statistical study has allowed for the organization and the definition of the relevance of data for the study. It consisted of discarding those categories that are not useful for it and keeping those who may fit for the purpose of study of the language of happiness and success.

Those elements selected for further study, primes related to emotions and sensations, nouns, and adjectives, were looked for and analyzed, following Goddard classification of primes that have to do with sensation and emotion.

The technical tools used to carry out the dissertation were Sketch Engine, for the corpora, Google Drive (for organizing data and likes and to classify primes and parts of speech manually), and Wordart.com, Live.amcharts.com and Meta chart for the tables.

4. Analysis and Results

The point of departure of the analysis is on numbers, that is, the raw data that can be extracted from the corpora in two periods—May 2015 and May 2018—from publications of five authors on leadership and personal development on Instagram. *Table 2* presents a schematic view of words, publications, and likes in each period:

Table 2. Raw data of corpora from 2015 and 2018

	2015	2018
Words per period	7,006	12,994
Number of publications	205	249
Likes per period	102,598	850,381
Average	500.55	3,415.18
Maximum	1,232	12,040
Minimum	87	268

The number of words used in publications in the same month of the two periods shows an increase of 85.47% from 2015 to 2018, going from 7,006 words to 12,994 words, respectively. This percentage reveals that during a period of three years, the authors have nearly doubled the amount of words they used in their posts. As for the number of publications, it shows a growth of 21.46% from 2015 to 2018. Therefore, the percentage of publication growth is not proportional to

the increase of the number of words. The number of words per publication has gone from an average of 34.17 words in 2015 to 52.18 words in 2018. This aspect points to a change in the linguistic pattern of the publications from one period to another, because the number of words grew, while slightly increasing the number of publications. Issues such as frequency and language category will be considered in the analysis.

Considering the number of publications, the likes have increased 8.28 times from 2015 to 2018, going from an average of 500 likes per publication in 2015 to 3,415.18 likes per publication in 2018. This significant growth might have a relation with the relative stability of publications, but also with the increase in the number of words per publication, and, consequently, with the type of new words used and their combination. It is important to note that the number of likes is more relevant to a publication (as in *Table 4*) than to the number of words, as a person gives the like to the publication as a whole for its message, not for its length. However, many times throughout the discussion, the number of words will be mentioned as relevant or outstanding to publications for general facts.

As it has been stated before, the main interest of this research is to discover the relation between primes and some parts of speech—nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and pronouns—related to the language of happiness and success, and the number of likes in publications. To find this out, first there is a need to search for the particularities of use of primes, the frequency of use, the relevance they have in the most liked and less liked publications in each period—according to the categories established by Goddard—, the collocations and the strategic position they have within the publications. Then, a close analysis of the five parts of speech will be determinant in knowing their influence to the number of likes, if any, along with primes. This will be done by following the categories established by Goddard adapted to the parts of speech.

4.1. Primes—Coincidences and Relevance

One of the core aspects of the NSM is formed by the semantic primes, simple words with equivalents in most languages. Out of the 65 primes that make up the English list (Goddard, 2018), the two corpora studied in this research contain almost all of them, with few exceptions. Given the fact that 20 of the primes appear within the most frequent words of each category in 2015 and 2018 (See *Table 4*), the need to a more in-depth analysis of the prime coincidence is essential to the research. This will be done by the observation and analysis of the facts and changes in primes related to emotions and sensations, to the language of happiness and success from one period to another, to find out if they are relevant in this type of publications and if their use has changed language and influenced the number of likes.

When looking at raw numbers, there are 857 primes in the 2015 corpus, and 1,977 primes in the 2018 corpus. It means that primes make up 12.23% of the corpus in 2015, while this

percentage increased to 15.21% in 2018. Considering the number of publications in each period, as an average there are 4.18 primes per publication in 2015 and almost 8 (7.94) primes per publication in 2018. This goes to show that the number of primes per publication has almost doubled from one period to another and this is especially relevant considering the number of likes is per publication, not per number of words.

A first in-depth look at the primes used in both corpora points to a few primes that do not appear in any period. Three of them belong to 'temporal elements'—A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME—while the other belongs to 'logical primes'—MAYBE. Three others appear with low frequency and the same in the two periods. It is the 'mental predicate' HEAR, and ABOVE and NEAR from 'space' category. Some other primes have decreased considerably in number from 2015 to 2018: PART, from 'relational substantives'; FEW, from 'quantifiers'; BIG, from 'descriptors'; SEE, from 'mental predicates'; WORDS, from 'speech'; SIDE, from 'space'; and VERY, from 'intensifier, argumentator.'

All the other primes have experienced a growth in the frequency of use from 2015 to 2018, either small, either more notable. In order to look for significant data for the present research, the study will focus on the description of each class of selected primes that have to do with emotions and sensations (Goddard). It will highlight the most salient examples from the two corpora in each period, with their correspondent number of likes. From data included in this study, several frequent primes in the corpora coincide with these seven classes.

4.1.1. Personal and Social Primes

First, the group of 'personal and social primes'—SOMEONE, I-ME, PEOPLE—is the most salient category of primes that have to do with emotions and sensations. It registers a total of 113 tokens in 2015 and 286 tokens in 2018. In 2015, the ascending order of use is SOMEONE, PEOPLE, ME, and I. In 2018, the order of use is exactly the same, but with considerably higher frequency in each prime (See *Table 3*).

(1) **I** is one of the most frequent primes in both periods. However, a closer look at the publications above the average in 2015 will show that only 3 out of 24 publications use this prime within the text. In 2018, there are 23 above the average out of 55 publications in which I is used. The proportion of use within the most liked has grown from one period to another. Here are some examples from 2018:

(a) And then one day **I** decided that hurry and stress were no longer going to be part of my life. Best decision **I** ever made! Bring your focus back to what really matters - the secret to achieving both progress and peace. (8,051 likes)

(b) **I** don't celebrate busy. **I** celebrate freedom.

I don't celebrate busy. **I** suppose that makes me a different voice among influencers who say just work work work hustle hustle grind. **I**'m all for the effort. But effort without a life and without

love and without purpose-that's just busywork. That's just being an ANT. [...] **I** keep vision as my guide and discern what's truly important: relationships, health, contribution, learning. The rest is distraction, flown over like an eagle passing over barren fields gliding quickly toward his abundant homeland. (6,467 likes)

(c) The thing is, **I** absolutely believe in you. You have been through enough, you are worth it, and there's no reason to wait to chase your dreams anymore. (5,604 likes)

The relevance of this primes is confirmed by the change in the frequency of use from one period to the other, but also by two other aspects: first, unlike publications of 2015 that use **I**, the most liked in 2018 do not use it in phrases made for advertising, but to portray a specific, quasi impersonal idea (b); second, they orient the use of **I** toward the reader, turning the conversation to the prime YOU, as in (a) and (c). It is typically used in these profiles to narrate a personal experience, an anecdote, or to give a piece of advice, based on something the author lived, thought, or felt in a particular moment. Along with **I**, ME is present in many publications that include **I**, with likes above the average in 2018.

(2) PEOPLE is used in 8 publications above the average in 2015, one of which is the tenth more liked:

(d) Life is short. Help more PEOPLE. (1,023 likes)

Surprisingly, in 2018, there are 5 publications that contain PEOPLE in the top 15 most liked. It is used as referring to *persons in society* (e), to *happy and successful individuals* (f), or to people with *special human characteristics* (g). This goes to show that PEOPLE is a prime important to the number of likes.

(e) It's the start that stops most PEOPLE. [...] When you get a really good idea, you should act on it. When you start where you are and with what you've got, and you bring your mind to focus on that idea, you will attract everything that you need! [...] (12,040 likes)

(f) [...] If you are ready to learn the tools and tactics that the most successful, happy and prosperous PEOPLE on the planet use to dial in their focus and achieve epic results, you need to be in the room this year at #PersonalMasteryAcademy. [...] (7,317)

(g) The world needs more kindness, now more than ever. Tag the kindest PEOPLE you know to let them know they're elevating our world in their own unique way. (7,080)

Other collocations in publications with likes above the average in 2018 are: *lives*, *positive*, *remarkable*, and *fine*. All these words, the adjectives and the noun *lives* are words with positive connotations and make reference to qualities linked to emotions and sensations. PEOPLE appears in 18 publications above the average of likes in 2018, along with these and other positive words.

(3) SOMEONE was used in one publication in 2015. However, 2018 records a frequency in 11 of them. The single case in 2015 is linked to positive words in context, SOMEONE *doing something right*, a phrase that registers three primes—SOMEONE, DOING, and SOMETHING. The coincidences of SOMEONE in 2018, in line with the orientation of 2015, are also linked to

positive words, especially in publications with likes above the average: *be* SOMEONE *who is generating results* (*to generate results* can be considered positive in this context), *share with* SOMEONE *you believe in* (*to believe in* also bears a positive connotation), *tag* SOMEONE *. . . who needs to hear this /. . . .you see a whole lot of good in* (the idea of tagging, which is used in SM consists in mentioning another person in the publication, usually because what is said refers to them or the content could be relevant for them. In this case, it is because the content is positive and could be of their interest). Another example is *Become* SOMEONE *that really* WANTS *to help* OTHER PEOPLE. It portrays a publication over the average in the number of likes (3827) because it contains many primes. These primes are also related to concepts that point to emotions, happiness, and success: *become* and *help*.

A relevant aspect of all these examples is that they also include many other primes, apart from SOMEONE. Some examples are: HEAR, GOOD, WANT, OTHER, and PEOPLE. SOMEONE appears along with these words in 8 publications with likes above the average.

Although Goddard does not mention *you* as a personal and social prime linked to emotion and sensation, what is observed in this research is that YOU as a prime, along with the pronoun *your*, are two of the most frequent words in both periods. The orientation of language in the field of leadership and personal development profiles shows a clear tendency toward the use of this second person singular pronoun and prime—YOU—, considerably more than **I**. This is due to the fact that the discourse has changed from personal example narrative to direct speech, motivational language that implies a straightforward way of addressing the audience, with clear, persuasive objectives. An easy way to show this is the analysis of the five less-liked publications in 2015 out of which five employed pronouns that referred to the author or his team (*I*, *my*, *me*, *we*), while YOU appears a couple of times. In 2015, the five publications that had the highest number of likes employed only the prime YOU and the pronoun *your*.

At a larger scale, and with a clear big increase in the number of likes are publications of 2018. YOU is included in 82 publications out of the 100 most liked in this period. In 2018, publications that had the lower number of likes included between their wording the pronouns *my* and *us*, while the top five most like only used YOU, *your*, and references to OTHERS. YOU is also often used in MLT, both in oral and written discourse, particularly in books. This pattern has already been observed in examples (a), (c), (e), (f) and (g) and is present in many more publications with the highest number of likes.

4.1.2. Mental Group of Primes (FEEL, THINK, WANT, DON'T WANT, KNOW)

The second group of primes that Goddard classified as linked to emotions and sensations is the 'mental' group. These primes reflect the intersubjectivity of emotion concepts and are made up of verbs. Within our corpora, a quick look at numbers (*Table 3*) will show all of them have been

used more in publications from 2018 than in 2015. KNOW, THINK, and FEEL have increased proportionally to the growth of word number from one period to another. For KNOW, the most frequent collocation is with YOU in both periods, but is equally present in publications above and below the average. THINK is presented as a positive practice in this type of language and is mainly linked to positive actions in 2015. In 2018, it is presented together with *creating space to do it*, *to think positively or in bug terms*, and *the way you think*. On the other side, FEEL doesn't follow a pattern for collocations in 2015, while in 2018 is linked to *the way you feel* and to *the way others feel*, as a motivation to overcome anything, even though one has negative thoughts or feelings, and it appears in 7 publications with likes above the average.

WANT stands out in this category for the growth it has experienced from one period to another—from 11 publications in 2015 to 53 in 2018. Its main collocations were with *everything*, *life*, and *what you/we* in 2015, while in 2018, although these use continued, WANT appears more than in 2015 preceded by YOU and before an action verb or one linked to the concept of success: *to do*, *to increase*, *to be*, *to dedicate*, *to finish*, *to reach higher*, or *to happen*, as in (h) and (i).

> (h) Getting into world-class physical condition is one of the best moves you can make as a leader. You can't do great things if you have no energy. You must get fit to lead. The best of the best all had rituals and routines that elevated their game. Do you WANT to reach higher and do more than 95% of the population does? [...] (5,995 likes in 2018)

> (i) If you or I WANT to be, do, or have something that is entirely different, we must do things that are outside of the box we have built for ourselves. We need a strategy that is based on uncommon sense. Our paradigm dictates our logic. Our logic controls our habitual behavior. And our behavior produces our results. [...] (5,537 likes in 2018)

All primes in this category appear along with other primes in publications. This establishes a pattern of a combination of primes that, together, might contribute to making a publication more liked than others.

4.1.3. Quality of Feelings (GOOD, BAD, VERY)

The third group, 'quality of feelings,' includes three different primes—GOOD, BAD and VERY—and is the second less frequent group. As publications in the corpora use mainly positive words, BAD is only used in one publication in 2015 (with likes above the average and in contrast with GOOD) and in four in 2018 (all of them in publications with likes below the average. Although the tendency is of growth from one period to the other, the use of this prime is normally in the form of antithesis to a positive word—normally BAD is put in contrast with GOOD to bring this last into attention. The frequency of use, and the fact that it is a prime used in publications with likes below the average, make it relevant to show that publications above the average contain primes with positive connotations more than primes with negative connotations.

VERY was used in more publications in 2015 than in 2018. However, another prime more relevant to language of success, MORE, is used with higher frequency and has experienced

a growth in time. This has to do with the tendency in SM to talk more about 'the quantity' than about 'the quality' of achievements and material things. Examples with frequent words followed by more from 2015 are: *learn, expect, succeed, achieve, become, help, and grow*. Others from 2018 are: *earn, learn, read, become, do, be, live, take more risks*.

GOOD was used in 2015 and its frequency per publication grew considerably in 2018. The most liked publication in 2018 contains it (e), as well as 16 other publications with likes above the average. It is linked especially to material concepts (GOOD *things*), as well as to ideas (GOOD *news,* GOOD *thoughts*), and time (GOOD *day*).

4.1.4. Sensation Concepts (BODY, PARTS)

These two primes are used in very few publications in both periods. Therefore, they are not considered relevant for this research as primes.

4.1.5. Temporal Elements (FOR SOME TIME, IN ONE MOMENT)

Although the 'temporal elements' mentioned by Goddard do not appear in the corpora (FOR SOME TIME, IN ONE MOMENT), there are others from this group of primes that are relevant for the study.

(1) WHEN (time) is used in 19 and 26 publications, in 2015 and 2018, respectively. In both periods it is used together with words that question a present moment with a prospective idea for the future (k), or a condition (j).

> (j) WHEN you get a really good idea, you should act on it. WHEN you start where you are
> and with what you've got, and you bring your mind to focus on that idea, you will attract
> everything that you need! #BobProctor #LinkInBio #Start #Idea #Mind #Attract #Love (12,040
> likes in 2018)

> (k) When no one else believes in your vision, you absolutely must stay true to your vision.
> (6,773 likes in 2018)

The fact that its frequency and presence in publications above the average grew proportionally to the number of words per period makes this prime not stand outstanding.

(2) NOW is a prime that has experienced growth, going from being present in 10 publications in 2015 to 39 in 2018. Whereas in 2015 it only registered one coincidence within publications with likes above the average, in 2018 it was used in 13 publications in the same conditions. 5 coincidences were within the 30 most liked in 2018. The change in the frequency of use coincides with the importance that these leadership and personal development profiles give to the idea of the present, of the moment you live in this right moment (m), to take action here and today, to own your life (l).

(l) Common sense is not common practice and so we suffer. You know what is needed to change your life. Do it. Now go get some rest this weekend and remember to be #grateful for all the blessings of #life (7,526 likes in 2018)

(m) The world needs more kindness, now more than ever. Tag the kindest people you know to let them know they're elevating our world in their own unique way. (7,080 likes in 2018)

In relation to this prime, there is another one from the same category: MOMENT. Although its frequency is low, 6 out of 11 coincidences in 2018 appeared between the publications with likes above the average.

4.1.6. Events and Actions–Cognitive Scenarios (HAPPEN, DO)

Out of the two primes included by Goddard in his classification, HAPPEN has was only used one more time in 2018 than in 2015. In publications with likes above the average in 2015, it is more used than in publications above the average in 2018. However, the likes in 2018 are notably higher than in 2015, what gives ground for thinking it is not this prime what influences the publication in which it appears. Its main collocations are with *move*, *goals*, *faith*, *good*, but also with the concept of *control of what is going on* in both periods.

Regarding DO, apart from its uses as an auxiliary verb, it is frequently used as an action verb. Its frequency has increased from 2015 to 2018 and the main collocations and uses in 2018 are: *DO it, DO your best, DO stuff, DO it now, DO something, DO what you love*.

4.1.7. Logical Primes (*because*, *can*, *not*, *like*)

Texts in both periods include the primes proposed by Goddard in this category. However, they are not as relevant for the study as the other categories because they are not within the most liked in any of the periods, although they are frequently used in the rest of the publications.

The detailed analysis of primes in this section gives ground for affirming that primes analyzed according to Goddard's classification are important to the language of leadership and personal development profiles, as their number has increased within the publications from 2015 to 2018. Thus, the use of certain primes can change the general perception of a publication and, to a certain extent, orient the reader towards it. However, not all primes can do this equally. Some primes exert a stronger influence, because they can establish the direction of a publication—such as the primes I, YOU or PEOPLE, from the 'personal and social primes' category—while others impact when combined with other primes in the same text—the 'mental group of primes.' Notwithstanding, it cannot be stated that only the primes—alone or combined with other primes—are the linguistic elements behind the likes the readers give to publications. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of some parts of speech is necessary to determine, to which extent these also influence the number of likes or they do not do it at all.

Table 3. Realization of primes by category in the corpora of 2015 and 2018

Category	2015	2018
1. Personal and social	**113**	**286**
someone	1	11
I	76	175
me	19	52
people	17	48
2. Mental	**39**	**124**
feel	6	17
think	13	21
want	11	53
don't want	1	2
know	8	31
3. Quality of feelings	**32**	**72**
good	25	63
bad	1	4
very	6	5
4. Temporal elements	**34**	**76**
for some time	0	0
in one moment	0	0
when	19	26
now	10	39
moment	5	11
5. Events and actions	**91**	**169**
happen	7	8
do	84	161
6. Logical primes	**92**	**212**
because	4	16
can	18	36
not	64	153
like	6	7
TOTAL	**401**	**939**

4.2. Frequencies of Parts of Speech

To analyze the different parts of speech, it is necessary to have an overview on their frequency of use in one period and the other. The following data (*Table 4*) show the most common parts of speech and the most frequent words calculated per number of publications on each period, and expressed in percentage.

The most frequent words of each class in black are coincident in 2015 and 2018 in both corpora, but they are not primes:

- ✓ Nouns: *life*, *success*, *day*, *today*, *dream*, and *world*.
- ✓ Adjectives: *great*, *grateful*, *positive*, *new*.
- ✓ Pronouns: *your*, *it*, *my*, *we*, *our*, *they*, *me*, *them*.
- ✓ Adverbs: *so*, *just*, *never*, *always*, *most*.
- ✓ Verbs: *get*, *make*, *change*, *take*.

The words in green and italics are non-coincident from one period to another, but each one is between the most frequent in its period.

- ✓ Nouns: *gratitude*, *goal*, and *week* in 2015; *thing*, *love*, and *motivation* in 2018
- ✓ Adjectives: *important*, *beautiful*, and *powerful* in 2015; *high*, *happy*, and *personal* in 2018.
- ✓ Pronouns: *their* in 2015, and *yourself* in 2018.
- ✓ Adverbs: all adverbs are coincident either as primes or as no primes.
- ✓ Verbs: *use*, *become*, *create*, *give* in 2015; *go*, *need*, *let*, and *learn* in 2018.

The words in each word class that are marked in red are primes (NSM) and are coincident in both periods with different frequency, except for four verbs. These were previously analyzed in section 5.1.

- ✓ Nouns: TIME, PEOPLE, WAY.
- ✓ Adjectives: GOOD, MORE, BIG.
- ✓ Pronouns: YOU, I.
- ✓ Adverbs: NOT, HERE, ALL, MORE, NOW.
- ✓ Verbs: BE, DO, HAVE, SEE, LIVE, WANT, KNOW.

The ten most frequent adverbs are the same in both periods, although not in the same order of frequency. Half of the most frequent are primes and have already been mentioned; the others are not linked to the language of happiness and success, and cannot be classified according to Goddard's classification of primes. Regarding pronouns, *you*, *your*, *it*, *I,* and *they* have more than doubled their frequency of use per publication from 2015 to 2018, the most notable one being *you*, almost once per publication in 2015, and 2.26 times in each publication as an average

in 2018. Other pronouns have experienced a smaller increase, such as *my*, *our*, and *them*, while others have considerably decreased their use per publication, such as *we*. In relation to the number of likes, the most liked publications of both periods, use mainly *you* and *your* together with:

(1) **verbs** that drive to action: *start, bring, attract, act, stop*

When *you start* where you are and with what you've got, and *you bring* your mind to focus on that idea, *you will attract* everything that you need.

(2) **nouns** related to the mint and productivity: *focus, key, performance, growth*

You bring your mind to *focus* on that *idea*.

Because *your growth* is in the recovery.

Your daily decisions manufacture all future *performance*.

(3) **adjectives** linked to do with emotions and capacity—normally positive—or are used together with verbs in negative, to contrast it after to positive actions or feelings: *true, epic, humble*

[*You*] stay *true* to your life's work.

[*You*] develop *epic* levels of confidence so you get your big dreams done.

[*You*] keep a *humble* spirit.

The most common verbs that are coincident in each period are: *be*, *do*, *have*, *get*, *make*, *change*, and *take*. Apart from *be* (that appears 1.56 times in each publication in 2015, and 2.75 times in each publication in 2018) and *have* (that appears in 31.71% and 59.04% of publications, respectively in 2015 and 2018), the others have something in common: they are verbs related to action.

A quick look at the most frequent and coincident nouns will show something evident: many are related to complex concepts that have various ways of interpretation depending on the context. They can easily be linked to ideas that have to do with emotion and sensation, and therefore, to happiness and success: *focus*, *purpose*, *kindness*, *growth*, *epic*, *movement*, *opportunity*, *progress*, *performance*, *productivity*, *common sense*, *meditation*, *forgiveness*, *goals*, *visions*, or *people*. Some others are linked to timing, such as *day*, *time*, and *today*; others are related to existence, such as *life*, *success*, *world*, or *way*. Anyhow, all of them can bring the idea of happiness, when linked to other wording elements in context. Nouns will be a central part of further study.

Besides nouns, the second category that will be central to the further analysis of this research is adjectives. Known for their powerful effect in advertising, more persuasive than any other word class, adjectives used in our study share a common pattern: they are all positive; some

of them by themselves—*good*, *great*, *grateful*, *positive*—and others by what can be inferred from them in context—*more*, *big*, *new*.

Some typical examples in the most liked publications in 2015 are:

- Starting strong is *good*.
- Hardest times produce your *greatest* gifts. / *Great* achievement always requires great sacrifice.
- What if today, we were just *grateful* for everything?
- *Positive* energies attract *positive* energies and negative energies attract negative energies.
- All successful people are *big* dreamers.
- When you propose a *new* idea, give the person time to think about it.

2018 also brings in some examples in the most liked publications:

- When you get a really *good* idea, you should act on it. / You deserve *good* things.
- Those who live stunningly *great* lives never miss an opportunity to celebrate another human being.
- Remember to be *grateful* for all the blessings of life.
- Stay *positive* and keep hope my friend.
- Are you seeing beyond the obligations and connecting to the *bigger* dream? / Work towards achieving your *biggest* goals and visions.
- Every moment a *new* chance.

Table 4. Frequency of words (F) per publication (P) and percentages (%)

Nouns

2015	F	P	%	2018	F	P	%
life	50	205	24.39	life	111	249	44.58
success	31	205	15.12	day	61	249	24.50
day	30	205	14.63	*thing*	58	249	23.29
time	26	205	12.68	*love*	54	249	21.69
today	25	205	12.20	time	49	249	19.68
gratitude	18	205	8.78	people	48	249	19.28
dream	18	205	8.78	success	47	249	18.88
people	17	205	8.29	*motivation*	36	249	14.46
world	17	205	8.29	world	36	249	14.46
goal	17	205	8.29	today	32	249	12.85
week	16	205	7.80	way	32	249	12.85
way	16	205	7.80	dream	31	249	12.45

Adjectives

2015	F	P	%	2018	F	P	%
good	25	205	12.20	good	63	249	25.30
great	21	205	10.24	more	32	249	12.85
grateful	19	205	9.27	great	31	249	12.45
more	14	205	6.83	positive	22	249	8.84
big	11	205	5.37	grateful	19	249	7.63
positive	10	205	4.88	big	18	249	7.23
important	10	205	4.88	new	17	249	6.83
new	10	205	4.88	*high*	16	249	6.43
beautiful	9	205	4.39	*happy*	15	249	6.02
powerful	8	205	3.90	*personal*	14	249	5.62

Pronouns

2015	F	P	%	2018	F	P	%
you	192	205	93.66	you	565	249	226.91
your	116	205	56.59	your	291	249	116.87
it	77	205	37.56	it	186	249	74.70
I	76	205	37.07	I	175	249	70.28
my	65	205	31.71	my	130	249	52.21
we	64	205	31.22	we	69	249	27.71
our	33	205	16.10	they	54	249	21.69
they	22	205	10.73	me	52	249	20.88
me	19	205	9.27	our	50	249	20.08
their	12	205	5.85	*yourself*	36	249	14.46
them	12	205	5.85	them	22	249	8.84

Adverbs

2015	F	P	%	2018	F	P	%
not	64	205	31.22	not	153	249	61.45
so	22	205	10.73	so	61	249	24.50
just	18	205	8.78	just	59	249	23.69
here	16	205	7.80	now	39	249	15.66
never	16	205	7.80	always	34	249	13.65
always	13	205	6.34	more	29	249	11.65
all	12	205	5.85	all	26	249	10.44
more	12	205	5.85	most	23	249	9.24
most	11	205	5.37	here	22	249	8.84
now	10	205	4.88	never	22	249	8.84

Verbs

2015	F	P	%	2018	F	P	%
be	320	205	156.10	be	685	249	275.10
do	84	205	40.98	do	161	249	64.66
have	65	205	31.71	have	147	249	59.04
get	32	205	15.61	get	76	249	30.52
make	24	205	11.71	make	63	249	25.30
use	21	205	10.24	*want*	53	249	21.29
become	19	205	9.27	*go*	52	249	20.88
see	17	205	8.29	take	40	249	16.06
change	16	205	7.80	*need*	34	249	13.65
create	15	205	7.32	*know*	31	249	12.45
give	15	205	7.32	change	30	249	12.05
live	15	205	7.32	*let*	28	249	11.24
take	14	205	6.83	*learn*	28	249	11.24

F: Frequency
P: Number of publications
%: Percentage

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4.3. Classification and Analysis of Nouns, Adjectives, and Verbs

The results of the analysis of primes call for a study of the parts of speech that might be relevant in the number of likes. Apart from the pronouns, and primes, that have already been established as influential to the number of likes—I and YOU—nouns, adjectives and some verbs will be further analyzed. Frequency of use has not helped in determining their relevance for the likes, and although the most frequent lexical elements are important, the majority are not relevant and do not show a change in language as single lexical elements. However, the fact that many of them have a tendency towards positive emotions and sensations, expressing happiness and are oriented towards success, will drive the following analysis.

In this regard, following an adapted version of the groups established by Goddard (NSM) for the classification of primes and guided by the Motivating Language Theory, what will be presented further is the analysis of coincidences of parts of speech related to happiness, linked with the idea of success, and their relevance for the purpose of this study, in an attempt to determine their incidence and relevance in the number of likes. To do this, each publication has been classified separately, in order to determine if nouns, adjectives, and some verbs in particular are related to positive emotions and drive the reader to the concepts of happiness and success. This analysis has considered the number of likes to determine whether the hypothesis can be confirmed or not.

Nouns, adjectives and some verbs have been classified and analyzed according to the following adapted groups of the ones proposed by Goddard and the MLT:

1. *Personal and social concepts*: the concepts included in this category are related to the human being and his existence, his condition, and his social interaction.

2. *Mental and sensation concepts*: this category includes concepts related to the human mind, the intellect, cognitive, as well as concepts related to the senses.

3. *Concepts related to feelings and quality of feelings*: it includes concepts linked to the capacity of feelings, sensitivity, and the quality of those concepts.

4. *Temporal elements*: this category includes concepts related to time in any dimension.

5. *Concepts expressing events and actions*: here the focus is on concepts related to things that are happening, being organized, in movement or taking place. It indicates motion.

The figures shown in Table 5 represent the number of words cataloged in each period out of the total of words in each period. Not all words have been catalogued, just the ones that, by their sense and their meaning, had something to do with emotion, happiness and success. On the other hand, percentages in the table represent the proportion of each category within the total of words catalogued.

Table 5. Categories, number of words categorized, and percentages

	words 2015	% of total	% below average	% above average	words 2018	% of total	% below average	% above average
Personal and social concepts	132	12.70	5.00	7.70	622	19.37	5.00	7.70
Mental and sensation concepts	337	32.44	12.98	19.46	1,320	41.11	12.98	19.46
Feelings and quality of feelings	146	14.05	8.56	5.49	448	13.95	8.56	5.49
Temporal elements	263	25.31	10.50	14.81	174	5.42	10.50	14.81
Events and actions	161	15.50	8.00	7.5	647	20.15	8.00	7.5
TOTAL	**1,039**	100			**3,211**	100		

4.3.1. Year 2015

In 2015, the number of words catalogued for analysis was 1,039. This represents 14.83% of the total number of words in the corpus for that year. Publications under 200 likes tend to use concepts from all the categories mentioned above, without focusing on any of them more specifically. References to the 'personal and social' group (5%) are made through words such as *world* and *gods and people*, but the less liked do not even have words from this category. Another that has very few references is 'events and actions' (8%), with examples such as *challenge*, *growth*, and *making a difference*. Although these are concepts frequently used in personal development literature, in this case, they are not significant by themselves. For *making a difference*, the general content of the publication seems to not help, because it talks about a product of the author, and these types of publications are not well received by the readers. It has been observed that many of the publications from 2015 that make direct reference to advertising and persuasive allusions cause the contrary effect on the followers, who tend to be reluctant to the reading and do not "buy" the idea that is being presented.

References to 'temporal elements' (10.50%), and 'feelings and quality of feelings' (8.56%) are made in a like manner, more than the other two in publications below the average. Some examples of the first are *today*, *beginning*, *future*, *week*, and *day*; for the second, *blast*, *big*, and *great* are the most prominent. Lastly, the most frequent category is one of 'mental and sensation' concepts (12.98%), which include words such as *dreams*, *goals*, *beautiful*, *fantastic*, *learning*, or *fun*. Although almost every publication of the ones below the average include at least some positive words, which are included in one of the categories, the sole use of one of these words does not guarantee the success of the publication and does not persuade the reader to like it.

The number of likes of the most liked in 2015, with 1,232 likes, is ten times bigger than the less liked publication. The most liked show some tendencies toward change and some aspects that may contribute to the preference of the readers towards them. First, there are more references to the category of 'personal and social' concepts (7.70%), and these are more varied: *life* appears in many of them, along with *alive*, *people*, and *mortality*. The group of 'temporal elements' (14.81%) is very used as well, with elements such as *year*, *time*, or *early*. Some elements in this category are used as antonyms or opposed in the same publication, such as:

- *yesterday* and *today*

  Just because YOU couldn't DO something *yesterday* doesn't mean YOU can't achieve it *today*. YOU're one day stronger *today*.

  In this example, it is possible to observe that, apart from the opposition used to reinforce the idea of the present, *today* is used twice, to strengthen the idea of possibility.

- *starting* and *finishing*

  Starting strong is good. *Finishing* strong is epic.

  This is another example of the use of opposites to reinforce an idea, this time of force with *strong*. In this example, two elements from the category of 'feelings and quality of feelings' (5.49%) are used as well, and there is a progression between *good* and *epic* in the way of positivity and greatness.

Another category that seems to be more relevant for the number of likes is the use of some elements related to 'mental and sensation' concepts (19.46%), such as:

- *dreaming*, *passion*, *ideas*, *purpose*, *humbleness*
- *bigness* and *weakness*, in an example of opposed elements used to reinforce the idea of humbleness.

Concepts from this category appear six times between the most liked publications in 2015 and all along with publications. 'Events and actions' (7.5%) are represented as well by words such as *doing* and *work*.

To sum up, for this period of 2015, publications that include text that is too personal (of the author) and use words randomly are not as liked as publication with personal text, in which the author use words more carefully chosen, such as more positive words and concepts related to success and the way to attain it. Second, publications that use some figures of speech such as the use of antithesis (or opposites) tend to have slightly more likes than the ones that do not use any figure. In using it, authors put their publications to the topmost liked of the month. Third, publications that contain words related to time seem to have more likes in 2015, and there is a tendency toward the use of words within the category of 'mental and sensation' concepts that, combined with others, give publications more relevance. Last, none of the words identified

within the categories in 2015 prove to be the one persuasive element that drives the readers to like the publication. Those who have more likes are a successful combination of two or three parts of speech and primes.

4.3.2. Year 2018

In 2018, the number of words (nouns, adjectives and nouns) catalogued for analysis was 3,211. The less liked publication has 268 likes and the most liked one has 12,040 likes. What stands behind this big difference in likes within the same month?

The publication (1) with fewer likes was:

Your summer success awaits. Breakthrough to success 2018, live with Jack Canfield. Are you ready to make this summer the most successful summer ever? Now is your chance by enrolling in my 5-Day Breakthrough to Success event, a remarkable program that delivers the knowledge, skills, and experiences that will change your life - quickly and permanently. Hurry! Enroll by May 31 to instantly save $500!

While the publication (2) with the most likes was:

It's the start that stops most people. Link to Full Video in Bio! When you get a really good idea, you should act on it. When you start where you are and with what you've got, and you bring your mind to focus on that idea, you will attract everything that you need! #BobProctor #LinkInBio #Start #Idea #Mind #Attract #Love

Publication (1) presents some keywords, relevant in 2015 as belonging to the selected categories for this research, but still not enough to persuade the reader or follower to like it. These words include *life* from the 'personal and social' group, *knowledge*, *skills*, and *experience* from the 'mental and sensation' group, and *chance* and *success* from the 'events and actions' group. Although in any other publication, these words combined result in a more favorable response from the followers, the random combination in this publication does not favor persuasion. It is a text intended to inform and persuade people to buy a service, to enjoy an experience, an event that has a name and a person behind. The fact that the name of the author *Jack Canfield* appears is not positive, neither is direct references to his program several times. Words and expressions such as *hurry*, *enroll*, *now is your chance*, and *quickly and permanently* all together in one publication conform a text that is heavily biased and intended to direct persuasion, causing a negative effect in the minds of the reader.

Publication (2) presents one of the core aspects of the success of the publication, a feature also seen in few of the successful publications in 2015: the use of opposite terms in the same phrase. *Start* and *stop* are used together in the first sentence of the publication on the picture. It is what calls the attention of the follower, along with the fact that *start*, as a positive word is used before *stops*, which normally has negative connotations. The caption text includes many references to the 'mental and sensation' group, with words such as *idea*, used twice, *focus*, and *mind*. The group of 'events and actions' is also rich in words in this publication, using *act*,

start, *bring*, or *attract*. The combination of these words, along with the social prime PEOPLE, the 'sensation' concept *need* and the 'feeling' concept and prime GOOD is what makes the publication relevant and liked. Positive keywords put before the negative ones, opposite concepts put together and action words stand out as the combination behind the success of the publication. Moreover, this publication has already been mentioned in section 4.1. of primes, where other primes appeared together with these words.

Publications that received fewer likes in 2018 are characterized by the use of a variety of words belonging to the 'personal and social' group (6%) that include *life*, *champions*, and *achievers*. 'Mental and sensation' concepts (6.11%) are not very used in the less liked publications, using single words such as *mental*, *knowledge*, or *physical*, but not repeating or combining them with other words or primes to that extent as to persuade the follower to like the publication. As for 'feelings and quality of feelings' (3.95%) and 'temporal elements' (3.15%), they are used but not very frequently. Some examples of the former are *positive*, *good*, *great*, and *higher level*, while the latter are represented in many cases by the adverbs *now*, *today*, and *instantly*.

The most used group within the less liked in 2018 is 'events and actions,' represented by the action verbs *go*, *practice*, or *persevere*, and the nouns *opportunity*, *persistence*, *victory*, *transformation*, *growth*, or *chance*. *Success* stands out as a frequent word, but its use does not influence to that extent as to persuade as single element to make the publication more liked. Although some of the words mentioned above are also used in the most liked publications in 2018, the combination in the less liked in 2018 is not too sound and it does not result as persuading and appealing as others.

Graph 1. Categories use comparison (%)
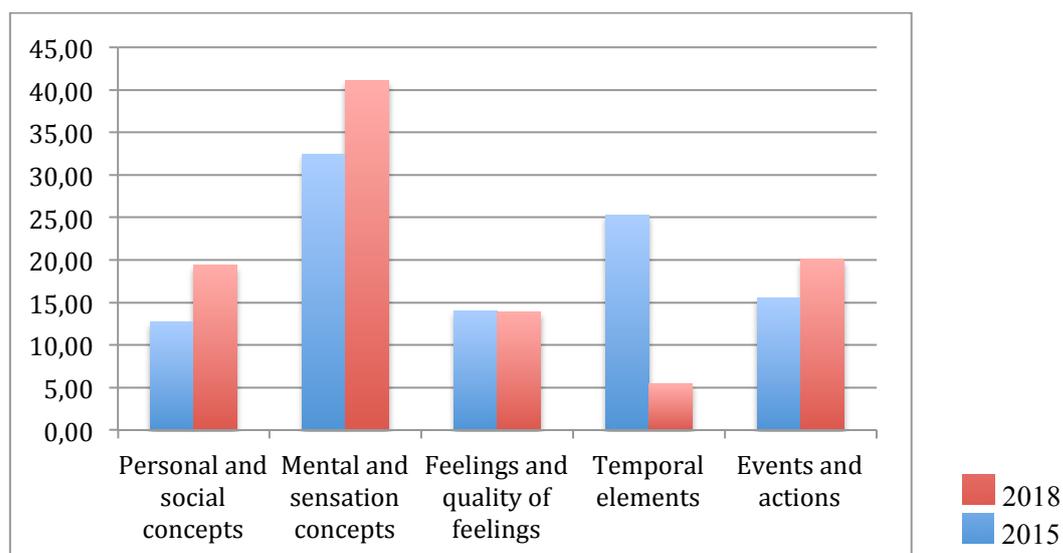
Regarding the most liked publications in 2018, those above the average, references to the 'personal and social' group (13.37%) are made through the repetition of words such as *people*, *person*, *life*, *kindness*, *humbleness* and *elite*. This category is permanent throughout the publications, although it is not the most frequent one. However, primes from the same category have proven to be relevant, as seen in section 5.1. Some example of these combined with primes are:

(a) The world needs more *kindness*, NOW more than ever. Tag the *kindest PEOPLE* YOU know to let them KNOW they're elevating our world in their own unique way. (7,080 likes)

(b) Be a *person* of action. SOMEONE who is all about generating results. BECAUSE getting great things done speaks for itself. (4,284 likes)

Opposing 2015, references to 'temporal elements' (2.27%) is barely made in 2018, with the use of *now*, as more frequent, along with *day*, *time*, or *this year* in a few publications.

(c) YOU already beat yourself up about it. YOU paid the price, YOU were locked in guilt, justice was served. *Now* let it go. Free yourself. Take your lesson and live a better life. (4,528 likes)

Words classified as 'events and actions' (11.15%) are more frequent than 'temporal elements' and verbs and nouns such as start, stop, act, growth, performance, progress, and opportunity are some examples. They are frequently used together with 'mental and sensation' concepts, and primes (d). They are different than the ones used in 2015, and more frequent.

(d) See yourself where YOU want to be and then be there. Don't be in the past. Be there! *Act* like the person YOU want to become. (4,067 likes)

'Feelings and quality of feelings' group (10%) has a special presence in the 2018 corpus within the most liked publications, as it includes words such as *good* (g), *big*, *epic*, *successful*, *happy*, and *great*.

'Mental and sensation' concepts are the most frequent category of words representing 35% of the concepts within the ones with likes above the average. Concepts such as *need*, *rest*, *recovery*, *peace*, *stress*, *tired*, or *sore*, more linked to sensations are used strategically and combined with the others in various manners. In the third most liked publication, *rest* and *recovery* appear together with words such as *productive* (twice), *mastery*, *creative*, *elite*, and *epic*, all words classified in one of the categories of the study, with high load of positive connotation.

(e) Sometimes the most *productive* thing YOU can do is *rest*. Humans need to *recover* after doing intense work. It truly is part of the *creative/productive* process that leads to *mastery*. Pro athletes and *epic* producers understand that the key to *elite* performance is *rest*, because your *growth* is in the *recovery*. (8,100 likes)

In the forth most like publication, *peace* appears together with *hurry* and *stress*, just to confirm the theory presented in the discussion for 2015, about the opposite terms, or words with negative connotation used to highlight a positive idea. The same publication contains words such as *life*, *focus*, and *progress*, all of them linked to happiness and success. The publication appears along with the prime **I**.

> (f) And then one day **I** decided that *hurry* and *stress* were no longer going to be part of my *life*. Best decision **I** ever made! *Bring* your *focus* back to what really matters - the secret to *achieving* both *progress* and *peace*. (8,051 likes)

The richest group of words used in the publications with likes above the average is the one that refers to the mind. *Idea*, *focus*, *mind*, *purpose* and *vision* are repeated throughout the publications many times, along with *dream*, *passion*, *creative*, *mastery*, and *goals*. What has been observed with publications and this category of words is that normally there is more than one word of this type per publication, such as in the most liked one:

> (g) It's the start that stops most people. Link to Full Video in Bio! When you get a really good *idea*, you should act on it. When you start where you are and with what you've got, and you bring your *mind* to *focus* on that *idea*, you will attract everything that you need! #BobProctor #LinkInBio #Start #Idea #Mind #Attract #Love (12,040 likes)

It is also the case of others:

> (h) World-class is a lonely sport. The only person you'll have your whole life with YOU. Approve of yourself. Love yourself. It's so important to have a calibrated heartset as YOU work towards achieving your biggest *goals* and *visions*. (6,993 likes)

> (i) You don't find #*purpose*. YOU experiment with your interests, pursue *passion* projects, set *goals*, miss *goals*, learn, adapt and ultimately choose what matters to YOU. No matter what YOU are doing, choose to be doing it or choose to be leaving it. Tough choices and strong wills forge the best characters! (4,021 likes)

When comparing the most liked and the less liked publications above and below the average, 'mental and sensation' concepts are present in the most relevant and outstanding in the most liked. Therefore, one of the aspects with which happiness and success have to do at the level of leadership and personal development is the category of words that have to do with senses and the mind, although they do not influence the number of likes used alone, but combined with other concepts from other groups and primes.

Another core aspect that works well and is consequent to the number of likes stands in publications that use opposites in 2018. Some examples are:

- *busywork - life's work*

Don't get stuck in the *busywork* - stay true to your *life's work*. (11,694 likes)

- *recover - work / productive - rest / performance - rest / growth - recovery*

Humans need to *recover* after doing intense work. It truly is part of the creative/*productive* process that leads to mastery. Pro athletes and epic producers understand that the key to elite *performance* is *rest*, because your *growth* is in the *recovery*. (8,100 likes)

- *start-stop*

Stop managing your time. *Start* managing your focus. (7,317 likes)

- *above-below*

Never believe YOU are *above* or *below* anyone. Keep a humble spirit. (7,574 likes)

- *busy - freedom*

I don't celebrate *busy*. **I** celebrate *freedom*. (6,467 likes)

- slow-fast / criticize- appreciate

Be *slow* to *criticize* and *fast* to *appreciate*. (6,928 likes)

- productivity - take a break

Sometimes the most effective *productivity* habit is to step away and *take a break*. (5,140 likes)

These and many other examples are more frequently used in 2018 than in 2015, and they are more prominent in the publications with likes above the average. The use of opposites creates in the mind of the reader the awareness of the two possibilities that one always has in any situation, and the idea that always the positive one will lead to happiness and success.

Table 6. Most relevant words related to happiness and success in 2015 and 2018 by category

Category	2015	2018
Personal and social	life, alive, people, mortality	people, person, life, kindness, elite
Mental and sensation	dreaming, passion, ideas, purpose	need, rest, recovery, peace, stress, idea, focus, mind, vision, dream, passion, creative, mastery, goals
Feelings and quality of feelings	good, epic	good, epic, happy, big, great
Temporal	year, time, early	day, time, this year
Events and action	doing, work	start, stop, act, growth, performance, progress, opportunity

To sum up, as it has been observed in these and other examples, most liked publications do not follow a pre-established pattern or structure, but use keywords, combined in the right manner. First, they use primes from the categories linked to emotions and sensation. Then, they accompany primes with key concepts—nouns, adjectives, and/or verbs—grouped according to

Goddard's classification. Thus, the most frequent combinations in publications with likes above the average are:

- primes + personal and social concepts + mental and sensation concepts
- primes + personal and social concepts + mental and sensation concepts + events and actions
- primes + mental and sensation + feelings
- primes + personal and social + mental and sensation + feelings

The words used in 2018 are different from the ones used in 2015 as the most relevant for each publication. The frequency and type of words within each category differs from one period to another. If the focus shall be put on one category in 2018 that has been the mental and sensation one, which focused on words related to the mind, the intellect and the senses. This way, idea, focus, mind, purpose, mastery, goals and visions, are words that stand out.

Another feature that stands out in 2018 is the frequent use of phrase constructions with opposites. This is a recurrent tool and judged by the number of likes, and it has proven to work well. Its frequency has grown very much throughout time, from 2015 to 2018. Although these features above have a certain importance on their own, once again, it has been shown that it is the combination of words from many categories what gives a publication more relevance and more likes.

5. Conclusion

In the present study, I have explored the primes and some parts of speech related to happiness and success in the language of authors who specialize in leadership and personal development on their publications on Instagram. Using Goddard's classification of primes linked to emotion and sensation as an analytical tool, I offered a perspective of the reality behind the language in publications of five authors in two different periods—May 2015 and May 2018— to discover the incidence of primes and some parts of speech—namely nouns, adjectives, and some verbs—in the number of likes a publication receives.

Based on corpus evidence, despite the high volume of words linked to emotions and sensations especially *happiness* and *success* used in both periods, I have found that not all words with a high load of positivity and motivation persuade a reader to like a publication. Furthermore, although the most frequent words used in each period coincide to a certain extent, what I observed is that these did not determine the number of likes as I initially assumed.

Thus, the first relevant aspect I discovered in the research of language related to the number of likes is the fact that language use has changed from 2015 to 2018 in the profiles that I analyzed. On one hand, in a relatively stable number of publications in the two periods, the number of words used in 2018 has almost doubled compared to the number of words used in

2015. The increase in the number of words per publication from one period to another shows the need of authors to explain or complete images with words. It also demonstrates that, in these types of profiles, the image alone is not enough to obtain likes. On the other hand, language has changed in variety and complexity. Vocabulary linked to happiness and success—the one that expresses emotions and sensations—is richer in 2018 than in 2015, and words and figures of speech (antithesis—use of opposite concepts) are combined in a more logical manner.

Second, from the perspective of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage, I classified primes or the first linguistic elements analyzed according to the groups proposed by Goddard. It is important to note that not all primes were classified; only the ones related to emotions and sensations were analyzed. With the analysis of primes in context in publications from 2015 and 2018, I have proved that they are an outstanding group of words as they are present in most publications with the number of likes above the average. This ensues from the comparison between publications in 2015 and 2018 and shows a higher presence in publications from 2018. The most important primes in the most liked publications are "I", "YOU", and "PEOPLE" from the 'personal and social' group of primes. Primes from the 'mental' group were "WANT", "THINK" and "KNOW"; they always appear combined with other primes. However, after analyzing primes, I can conclude that, despite their remarkable impact and presence in a high number of liked publications, they cannot be considered the exclusive influence of likes as single lexical elements.

Third, in view of the conclusion reached with primes, I made further analysis of nouns, adjectives, and certain verbs and classified them according to an adapted version of the groups proposed by Goddard's for primes. In the analysis, I discovered that there are more words related to happiness and success in the corpus from 2018 than in 2015. These, theoretically, could stand behind the growth in the number of likes a publication received. However, when studied closer, I observed that single words do not have the power of persuasion in these profiles. What attains persuasion are words in context—the combination of the right lexical items and frequency per publication of these words is what makes a difference in the evolution of language from 2015 to 2018 and the growth in the number of likes. Thereby, it is not the repetition of positive words that makes some publications more liked than others. The difference does not lie in frequency— although it does give hints about the language—but in the variety of terms combined strategically in each publication, so that it has a strong effect on the reader. 'Mental' concepts have proved to be the most influential category in 2018, combined primarily with the 'personal and social' group, and 'events and actions.' Concepts that denote 'feelings and quality of feeling' had a lesser effect on the reader.

To sum up, the primes classified in this research, along with nouns, adjectives, and some verbs, have confirmed to be the right combination for a successful publication in terms of likes. By themselves, primes, nouns, adjectives or verbs alone, if not combined together, cannot

persuade readers to like the publications. Specifically, what makes publications more distinctive and successful in 2018 than the ones in 2015 is the combination of primes with 'mental and sensation' and 'personal and social' concepts.

The findings of this research project have allowed me to recognize and appreciate the language used on Instagram—a social media more related to image—in the profiles of leadership and personal development. It is a tool in which language has multiple possibilities of study as its language is varied and in continuous development. Thus, further studies in this field could be carried out with larger corpora and should focus particularly on one part of speech such as nouns, or adjectives, or verbs. Equally, research only with primes—not only with the ones linked to emotions and sensations—could give interesting results, although for the moment it could be a little far-fetched. Another area of research could be of the concepts of *success* and *happiness* to see if they could work as semantic molecules. Finally, the data provided here, along with image and video, could allow for multimodal analysis to analyze how they work together and complement each other to have a persuasive effect through the number of likes.

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7. Annex

Screenshots of publications in 2015 from Robin Sharma's profile on Instagram (public content).

Screenshots of publications in 2018 from Robin Sharma's profile on Instagram (public content).

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