Neuro-Linguistic Programming Principles in Negotiations

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Abstract

Neuro-linguistic programming is one of the newest science in psychological field. It was developed in years of '70 by a mathematician and a linguist and it can be used for increasing personal development skills. It has a set of unique techniques which can be used to reach different types of advantages in interpersonal relationships. There are also a few voices who charge NLP practitioners for using the techniques in manipulation purpose.

This article aims to make an introspection among articles that treat neuro-linguistic programming principles and identify the implications of this science in negotiations.

Introduction

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In the last twenty years, business development began to concern increasingly more people. Corporations and big companies have realized that it might obtain significant results by paying attention of this subject. In this way it appeared new areas of interest as knowledge management, organizational behavior or personal development, all having in common the individual. They realized that in the final, development of the individual, leads to a development of the organization. Because science concerned with the study of human behavior is the psychology, specialists from this domain have tried to find solutions to the company's problems.

One of the most recently appearance in the psychological field is neuro-linguistic programming. It aims, as its developers said, is to discover the structure of human excellence. Combining mathematical algorithms with linguistic elements and observing human behavior they have created a concept that gains more and more followers worldwide.

As for research, there wasn't a lot of concern for transposing elements from NLP into business. Existing studies usually treats NLP as a therapeutic technique (as a science of human behavior) than as a pillar that can support employee development processes. Few researchers have developed a correlation between this two fields, so I think it's interesting and intriguing this leak of concern.

In this study I will analyze some NLP principles found in articles and I aim to correlate them with two styles of negotiation (distributive and integrative).

The purpose of this study is to identify and highlight specific elements of neuro-linguistic programming, applicable in negotiation. In the same time, it aims to make a correlation between a sciences from the psychological field with business.

The study objectives are:

O1: To define neuro-linguistic programming and to identify its principles

Through this objective I intend to realize a brief summary of the evolution of neuro-linguistic programming and highlight its characteristic elements. Being a science, neuro-linguistic programming have of course a value system, a methodology and a number of techniques. By this objective I propose to expose a set of fundamental principles from NLP, which I consider to be the most representative.

O2: To establish correlations between NLP principles and typologies of negotiation (depending on their purpose;

Negotiations can be divided into many categories; for the present study, I aim to analyze the negotiating styles as Professor George Siedel from the University of Michigan described it. With this goal I set out to analyze the principles of NLP according to their usefulness in negotiations.

Design and methodology

For documenting the research I applied the content analysis. Data base for study was created from 20 references published from 2008 to 2015. These were published on major publishers and treats various topics, including ontology NLP, conflict resolution using the principles of NLP, NLP impact on sales, or NLP for leaders and managers.

In the same time I filter the information expressing my own perception on the subject, based on a practice of 5 years in negotiation from managerial positions and the NLP practitioner certification I hold.

Results

Neuro-linguistic programming was developed in years '70 by the mathematician Richard Brandler and linguist John Grinder and is a model of human behavior who analyze how people describe their world, how they interact and communicate, how can they feel the happiness in interactions and how they can be helped to change the own representation of the community. A fundamental premise of the early work done by Brandler and Grinder was that they wanted to study people who were excellent and to identify what specifically they did to achieve this (Graham, 2006, 13).

On the beginning it was described as a science applicable only in psychological field, as a treatment base in psychotherapy. Because in years '70 – '80 people was addicted to knowledge, appearing a new science who promised to complete the theory about psychology, it was quickly propagated between scientists. Neuro-linguistic Programming operates from a positive context; it assume that all the human action is positive in intention (Craft, 2001, 127). Some of them was enthusiastic about the new phenomenon, others said it was just a way to advertise. The fact is that idea of neuro-linguistic programming has past the years and it began to be more visible. For now, the International Association of NLP said it have over 100000 followers all over the world.

By reduction to fundamentalism, the neuro-linguistic programming is a set of instruments, which induce the influence of human behavior while aiming to reach the maximum potential from every human being. These was developed combining linguistic elements with psychological and algorithms and the result was a complex methodology, which being used right, can reach the purpose for which it was created.

According to studied articles, I identified the next NLP techniques:
- Language meta-model;
- Pacing – Report creation;
- Sensorial acuity;
- Inner state management;
- Questioning technique ;

In the following section I will briefly describe each of them in a turn.

Language meta-model

The *Structure of Magic* introduced the core language model of NLP, called the meta-model, which remains central to the field (Gold, Thorpe and Mumford, 2010, 5). Is a set of principles and rules who is grounded in clinical hypnoses, counting on Ericksonian Language. This kind of language was developed and applied with success by the American psychologist Milton Erickson in years of '70 and is one of the famous techniques in noninvasive psychology.

Specificity of this technique consists in the way that the question are made; it have to induce the answer in the same time. Thus, instead of using questions as "which will be the priorities if we will sign the contract?" it is preferred to ask "which will be the priorities after we will sign the contract".

Pacing – Report creation

It is well known that once you can transpose in interlocutor's state, you have more chances to gain the negotiation. In any communication, the existence of a relationship is vital, a relationship of empathic resonance between the two partners as basis of the mutual confidence which the other can feel free to manifest (Zamfir, 2011, 1338). The technique of report creation assume exactly this fact: that the practitioner can see the image (in this case, the negotiation) through partner's eye, to figure out his point of view and how it will take the next actions. In this way, he will be able to anticipate the partner's movements and he will know to counterattack it.

Report creation assume in the same time the alignment to interlocutor; and here I'm referring both behavioral alignment and verbal (with non-verbal and para-verbal categories). It is known also the fact that when two people think the same, talk the same, behave the same, there will be more chances for that people to understand each other's.

Sensorial acuity

In a negotiation process, self-control is a very important instrument. As in poker games, every gesture or grimace can tell many things about yourself to an experimented negotiator. As higher levels of interest are elicited, intention and behavior start to separate and ultimately, common ground can be reached (Vinyamata Tubella, 2011, 3). From disturbance to irritation, from pleasure to enthusiasm, body expressions reveals in the most of the time the inner states. Sensorial acuity work on this level: teach the practitioner to focus on the partner's body expressions. In the beginning it will observe only the evident reactions, as the experience deepens, he will observe the details which at the first sight it will appear to be insignificant and at the master's level he will be able to observe and read even the micro-expressions of the face. In this domain, the focus on detail can represent the difference between a successful negotiation and a losing one.

Inner state management

As I have mentioned, the inner state control is very important and beliefs can also be limiting, a fact which will have a negative impact on all the other levels, especially on the capabilities level (Zamfir, 2012, 752). If using the sensorial acuity technique, the practitioner learn how to read the partner's state, here in the inner state management, he will try to add a mask on his. As he advanced in practice, he will be able to hide emotions as well as joy or angry. By not giving clues to negotiation's partner about your inner state, he will not know if his offer is satisfactory or not, and this thing brings a net advantage in the negotiation.

Questioning technique

For giving complete solutions to other people, the main condition is to have all the information you need. When you lose one or more facts, your solution can be under the solution of the opponents. Knowing what different people may not share the same reference experiences and meaning for the same word can enhance the quality of one's communication (Lee, 2000, 65). That's why, questioning technique means to ask as much as you need questions, to understand deeply the requirements.

One of the NLP axiom is that the map isn't the same with territory. That means if 10 people looks at a scene, each of them will have one opinion about what they had seen. And that fact is because the previews experiences who according to the butterfly effect from the chaos theory, define the human being through every action they take until that moment. Starting from these reasons, the questioning technique aims to clarify the interlocutor's point of view and to offer the practitioner a complex image of the situation.

Typology of negotiation

Negotiation processes can be divided in many categories. For this paper, I will analyze the categorization made by Professor George Siedel from Michigan –USA, who said that the negotiations can be distributive or integrative (Siedel, 2014, 67). The distributive negotiations are generally speaking, win-lose typology, in which the partners dispute the supremacy on different aspects (prices, territories etc.). In the other side, the integrative negotiations are collaborative negotiations, in which two or many partners collaborate to maximize the initial value.

To understand the difference between the two categories, let's take the following example: Let's say we have a pie disputed by 4 partners. In the distributive negotiations, each of them will want to

assure the biggest part of the pie and usually, this type of negotiation will end with the frustration of one or many of them. In the other side, in integrative negotiations, every participants agree with the idea that everybody needs a bigger slice so they work together to extend the pie. In the most of the cases, this type of negotiation are win-win.

Negotiation typology correlation with NLP principles

In the rows above I identified five neuro-linguistic techniques and two negotiation typology. In the following part, I will point out for the every typology, what techniques are necessary.

Distributive negotiation:

- Language meta-model: because is extremely important for a negotiator to use that words and expressions that make the partner to trust him.
- Report creation – using the same principles, that people accept easier the people who look alike, report creation is very important in a distributive negotiation.
- Sensorial acuity – high focus on details can make the difference between a successful negotiation and an unsuccessful one, that's why sensorial acuity is an element extremely important for negotiators involved in distributive negotiation.
- Inner state management – to mask the emotions represent an essential skill for an experimented negotiator, that's why this NLP technique is highly important, especially in distributive negotiations.

Integrative negotiation:

- Report creation – the same as in distributive negotiation, the report creation is very important here to. Once you solve this aspect, the communication with partners will be more facile.
- Questioning technique – considering that we deal with a collaborative situation between many partners, the questioning technique is a very important one.

Conclusions

Neuro-linguistic programming is an interesting domain for many people. Despite aren't many works in the specialty literature who link this domain with business, I express the belief that in the future, this think will set up (however, it exist a literature at the limit between belletristic and personal development who treat subjects like this).

The analyzed articles was taken from the well-known journals and had debated the NLP technique implications in negotiation. As was observed from the research results, the authors focused on language part and report creation of NLP and less on sensorial acuity; that's because the analyzed journals was economical one. If I was analyzing psychological journals, the issue probably was inverse.

There are many voices who say that using the NLP techniques isn't very moral because it is trying to influence the human behavior. The same with the other elements which was created in a purpose and used (by a small number of people) in others, it is true that NLP techniques can be used in malicious aims. The dividing line between influencing and manipulation is very thin, therefor the practitioner who is using that techniques have to make the difference between them. As a steel chisel in the hand of malicious men can create real dramas and in the hands of artist, can create real masterpieces.

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