

## NLP Methods of Motivation: Metaphor and Metamodel

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### Abstract

*The transition to the 21<sup>st</sup> century has also meant a change in the behavior of both employees and employers. The behavior of the employees is determined by a variety of reasons which are perceived by each individual as purposes. The task of a good manager, of a good leader, is to identify and activate employees' reasons and guide them towards productive work. If in the past employees worked and proved their loyalty to the employer, their career following a sure and somewhat predictable path, at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century motivation started to be considered crucial in the success seen not only at the organizational level, but also at the level of each department or project. The role of motivation is not only to make people work, but to make them work well, which involves the use of the whole physical and intellectual resources they have.*

**Key words:** metaphor, metamodel, methods, model, NLP

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### 1. Introduction

Neuro-linguistic programming (international acronym: NLP) has a philosophical foundation that has given rise to a wide range of practical developmental methods by *programming* thinking and language in order to achieve the desired results, being a useful tool for achieving performance in any field and not a mysteriously developed discipline, emerging from nothingness with an obscure origin. From the same point of view, NLP is a communication model focused on the identification and use of *patterns* in the processes of thinking that influence verbal and non-verbal behavior to improve the ability to communicate. Useful through their content, NLP methods provide precise tools applicable to managerial theory and practice.

### 2. Theoretical background

NLP methods can help the manager and the leader to achieve more easily specific objectives. Therefore, to solve various problems in the organization, certain employees or team can be influenced in order to achieve certain objectives, with the aid of action triggers: “decide!”, “be careful!”, “participate!”. The message is received and executed if active diathesis is used and the command is formulated concisely. By building the result, when choosing an action trigger, its action is projected - mentally - on the individual, thus optimizing both the triggering factor and the results.

### 3. Metaphor

In the book “Encyclopedia of systemic NLP and NLP new coding”, published in 2000, Dilts, R.B., and DeLozier, J., defines *metaphor* as “the transfer of the relationship between a set of objects and another one, in order to obtain some explanations”. Also, *metaphor* is “the figure of speech in which one thing is spoken of as though it were something else” (Dilts, 2008, p. 226). *Metaphors* are memorable and can contain both emotions and lessons. Humor is ideal for the

*metaphor*. a great metaphor leads the audience through several emotional states, from humor to grief (Molden, 2007, p. 152).

*Metaphor* is "the process of thinking about one situation or phenomenon as something else" (Dilts, 2014, p. 264), involving the following main components:

- *Isomorphism* – term used by some linguists to name the structure comparison between syllables, words and sentences; it takes into account the similarities of different representations. *Isomorphisms* have a structure similar to the one of comparisons, using words such as "I like (I don't like)", "or/or", "(the same) as". *Isomorphic metaphor* presents analogies with their narration as eloquently and realistic as possible.
- *Symbolism* – takes into account the structural aspects of the *metaphor*. Thus, the *symbol* may be defined as "an object, a character covering certain behaviors, answers, but generating anchors for others, as he/she/it is part of the inner reality of the concerned persons" (Iosif, 2013, p. 53).

*The metaphor* is the element used in outlining individual realities. When an individual uses a *metaphor*, he/she gives it his/her own interpretation. The main advantage of a *metaphor* consists of the fact that it can easily overcome the barriers of consciousness, reaching the subconscious level where a useful solution is much easier found for arising problems, solution based on knowledge, skills and experiences belonging to that individual. The subconscious gives certain significance to each thing in the inner or outer environment, but *metaphor* manages to overcome this obstacle. "an attribute specific to metaphors is that they facilitate communication. When metaphor is applied on the profound structures of experience, what was transferred or brought by the metaphor are relations, the place of attention, values, beliefs, assumptions." (Iosif, 2013, p. 53).

*Metaphors* can be: words, expressions, stories. They are based on the idea of comparison, and with its help they try to make information as accessible as possible (O'Connor, 2001, p. 95) and are used for decoding reality by any individual, and are classified into two categories, respectively: *surface* (associated with *isomorphisms*) and *profound* (they have a structure similar to relations, processes, forms, being much more abstract). Through applied directing language models, *metaphors* generate certain differences on language level, with the help of *linguistic markers* certain old perceptions being able to generate new ones with the role of redirecting main senses. "The advantages of using metaphors are: they address the unconscious and suggest solutions for solving a certain problem". In this way, they help individuals identify the defects on behavioral level, they improve elements necessary for the reframing process, they reduce the individual's resistance in the communication process. By using *metaphors*, behaviors become more flexible, and thusly optimize the communication process (Iosif, 2013, p. 55).

#### 4. Metamodel

The *metamodel* is defined as "a model with a number of linguistic distinctions that identifies language patterns that obscure meaning in a communication through distortion, deletion and generalization. It also includes specific challenges or questions by which the «ill-formed» language is reconnected to sensory experience and the deep structure..." (Dilts, 2014, p. 264).

The *metamodel* is the first and most important model developed within NLP, being a set of linguistic models that reconstitutes the connection between *deletion*, *deformation*, *generalization* processes and the experience that gave birth to them. This model uses language to highlight and overcome its limits and starts from analyzing the type of questions Perls, F.S., and Satir, V., used in psychotherapeutic work, as well as some of the ideas emitted by Korzybski, A.H.S., and contains two components (Andreas and Faulkner, 2008, p. 189):

- *a theoretical vision on language;*
- *a series of questions meant to lead to the elimination of informational generalization, distortions and shortcomings.*

Bandler, R.W., and Grinder, J.T., combined them with the researches of Chomsky, N. A., about *transformational grammar* and they published the results in 1975, in the book "The Structure of Magic. Volume I". *The NLP metamodel* represents the exposure of derivation of logic expressions and not the expressions themselves. This model works on the conditions that words manage to create an *anchor* on the level of an individual through an experience or a sensorial representation.

*The anchoring* is the process through which a stimulus or a representation (inner or outer) is associated with certain *external triggers* provoking a certain answer, which may be fast, or hidden, revisited. The NLP concept regarding anchors derives from the Pavlovian *stimulus* → *reaction* relation, which is a classic conditioning example.

Due to the fact that in Greek *meta* means *with, after* or *near*, the *metamodel* reconnects the experience with the language, imposing itself as linguistic model about language, clarifying it through itself with the purpose of allowing a better understanding of the interlocutor and a better expression. We communicate with the help of words, resorting to deletion, deformation and generalization, principles we apply to the profound structure of our experience, in order to bring it to the stage of verbally expressed *surface structure* (O'Connor, 2012, p. 214). Therefore, the *metamodel* represents the linguistic differences through which one can identify language patterns that *distort, delete* or *generalize* significance in the communication process, allowing *the partial generalization* of the information that the individual takes from the organization.

In order to fully understand the *meta model* we must first analyze the way thoughts are transposed into words, the language not being able to keep pace – in any circumstances – with the speed of thought, with its variety and sensitivity, only being an approximation of it. The person has an idea, a full vision of what he/she wants to say, called *profound structure*. This structure is unconscious, the language being hidden on a very deep level of the human brain. In order to express himself / herself, the human being "*shortcircuits*" *the profound structure*, what he/she pronounces being called *surface structure*. Both structures are necessary in different contexts. Questions regarding *meta model* produce a "*reverse engineering*" on the language, in the sense that it works with the *surface structure* for a better observation of the *profound* one behind it. In the transition from *the profound structure* to *surface structure*, the subconscious activates the following operational categories (Figure no. 1):

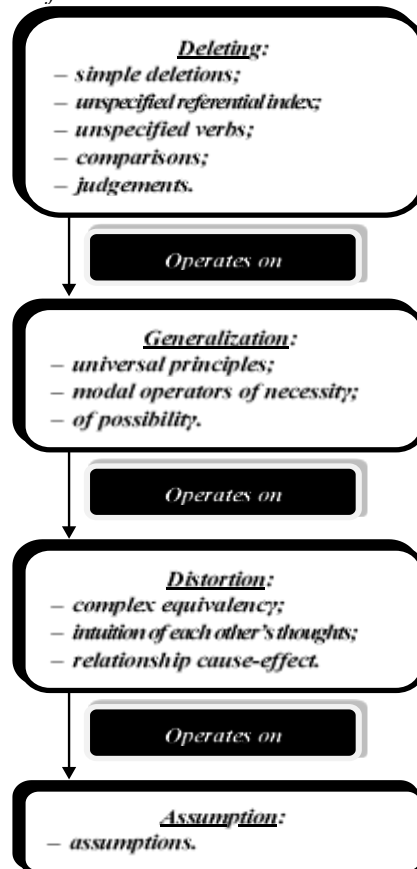
- *Deletion* of a part of the information available in *the profound structure*, which limits thinking and acting. This category materializes in the following specific *patterns: simple deletions, unspecified referential index, unspecific verbs, comparisons and judgments.*
- *Generalization*, by assigning an universal value, based on a limited personal experience, to all conditions and exceptions that would make a discussion boring or contradictory, which reduces the range of possibilities. In this category the following specific *patterns* materialize: *universal principles, modal operators of necessity and possibility.*
- *Distortion.* A simplified vision of the information, which limits the interpretation options, modifies the meaning and leads to other useless problems. This category materializes in the following specific *patterns: complex equivalents, sensing the other person's thoughts and the cause-effect relation.*

The three factors have a similar action: they take the *generalized* information or distort it in relation to a certain specific factor, a causal relationship, using a relationship between a linguistic structure and a certain environmental process etc. This means that in the end the concerned person interpreted in his/her own way the information received from the environment (Iosif, 2013, p. 46).

- *Assumption.* Ideas or assumptions considered as being *good* or *true* in order to make sense of the communication. In this category one single specific *pattern* materializes: *assumptions.*

It has the role of identifying missing information and replacing them so that, in the end, a certain result is produced. at the same time, *assumptions* have the role of determining, in the *cause-effect* relationship, the *complex equivalency* and *generalization*. The use of *assumption* can materialize in several directions, respectively: the type of searched information, the minimum quantity of information for the respective individual, the feelings transmitted by the respective information, in relation to what objective has the concerned individual placed.

Figure no. 1. Operational levels of NLP metamodel



Source: adaptation after Hall, L.M., 2007, p. 125.

Although the *metamodel* uses *deletions* and *generalization*, it has a fairly high degree of precision, as it uses the questions “who?”, “what?”, “how?” and “in what way?”; however, these are not used in case there is a lot of information, this leading in the end to the decrease of utility – overall – of NLP *meta model*. In order to achieve the *meta model* it is necessary to take the following steps: *sorting different states* (achieved for *re-anchoring* different aspects of the information received from the organization), *accessing different states* (in order for certain *anchors* to be *revisited* and optimized) and *creating a meta part* (for the purpose of mutual conditioning between several pieces of information and assimilating an *anchor* new to them). Operations specific to *meta model* (Iosif, 2013, p. 49-53):

- *Deletion* – represents the elimination of that information deemed redundant or which cannot pass the *VAK sensory filter* (associated-dissociated method in each sensory representation system). Certain constructions such as “I am happy!”, “I am uneasy!”, “I am confused!” or “I am scared!” insure the recovery of certain previously deleted information.
- *Comparisons* – “the best” and “the least good...” represent another form of deletion of information. “The best...” or “the worst...”, “better than...” or “worse than...”, “in comparison to...” and such other *comparisons* are nothing but a form of *deletion*.
- *Unspecific indexed references* – are linguistic constructions such as “which”, “what”, “these”, “people” that have the feature of being able to *delete* information from sentences, but maintaining their sense.
- *Substantivizations* – insure the transformation of an action, usually a verb, into a *noun*, as static entity or object. *Substantivizations* refer to changing a process in the deep structure into a static event and they have the role of connecting with a certain part of the experience.

- *Unspecific verbs* – are, generally, sensory constructions that, at the moment of realizing a process, activate the senses, respectively *sensory acuity*. “To believe”, “to know”, “to feel”, “to touch”, generally the sensory verbs, are considered *unspecific verbs*. These *verbs* have the feature to make oneself change their mind in a certain process, but also to realize their senses.
- *Modal operators* – are of *possibilities* and of *necessities*. aggressive persons tend to use *modal operators of possibilities*. In this category, a single specific *pattern* materializes: “I can do everything!”. *Modal operators of necessities* of a passive person show how he/she targets the fulfilment of own modalities, necessities, possibilities; we use the predicates “can...”, “is possible...”, “is impossible...”, “should...”, “should necessarily...” to motivate ourselves. Modal operators of necessities are: “must...”, “is necessary...”. *Modal operators* refer to how an individual builds his/her own representations in the outside world and define the borders of our *map* and our own style of intervening there.
- *assumption* – refers only to a moment when the action will take place. This is a linguistic fundament, so that a certain statement makes sense. *Assumptions* in a communication process work indirectly and unconsciously and must be accepted in order to give meaning to the communication. They are a form of influence. Used efficiently, they can help achieve results in a short period of time. The value of knowing these patterns consists of the fact that the individual becomes aware of the optimum processes that work within them.
- *Cause-effect relation* – connects the two elements and can be implicit, as well as explicit. The two experiences are based on a verbal description. The use of this relation in the communication process helps the weaker person to assume his/her own feelings, states and experiences, thusly facilitating the adoption of an active attitude, by taking into consideration as many possibilities as possible.
- *Complex equivalency* – assumes the finding of the *breaching word* and reinserting it into another phrase, without changing its meaning. “The complex equivalency represents a pattern with a particular structure, by means of which a person’s behavior can be identified based on verbal and non-verbal signals” (Dilts, 2008, p. 117). All signals (verbal and non-verbal language) issued by an individual in a certain period of time, plus the *complex equivalency* pattern will lead in the end to obtaining customized information about that individual by the manager and leader. This information is generally distorted by the own feelings as well as by the state of mind at that moment of the respective person. Building a *complex equivalency* is based on certain words such as: “is...”, “this means...”, “is equivalent to...”. In the case of a *complex equivalency* we create, on mental level, a relationship between one or more words and the experience designated by those words, for each learned word having a different inner experience.
- *Universal quantifiers* – “allow the achievement of generalizations in the communication process, but at the same time they allow their increasing complexity” (Bandler, 1993, p. 97). The universal quantifiers “always”, “everything”, “each”, “never” represent a form of deleting information. *Universal quantifiers* have the role of abstracting the information received, therefore the *generalizations* are very hard to achieve.
- *The importance of sensory experience* – orientation of eyes, tone, mimicry, gestures can give the manager and leader enough information to make a decision or they can be used in the case of a too little communicative individual.
- *Exterior behavior* – includes actions and/or events we perceive from the exterior environment. *The significance* (inner state) represents the interpretation we give to a certain event or a certain action in the exterior environment. *The static image* of an *exterior behavior* means its transformation in semantic construction that action materializes in, leading, in the end, to *substantivization*. The *substantivization* represents the transformation of a static image into words identifying that action, therefore achieving a *cause-effect* relation.

- *Mind reading* – is a model correlated with *assumptions*. The use of *mind reading* assumes the existence of a *cause-effect relation* between two persons, but also of this instrument's effect on the targeted person. In this process, many things can be found about the inner experience of that person. The person trying to achieve this process involuntarily projects his/her own perceptions, values, experiences. *Mind reading* appears when an individual speaks or acts as if he/she knows the inner experiences of the other person.
- *Judgments* – in its assessment we must take into consideration the categories used by the person who made the *judgment*. Thus, the questions "who?", "what?", "when?", "where?" can be used to successfully recover the desired information.

*The metamodel* leads to explaining contexts in which a person manifests himself / herself (Lewis and Pucelick, 1990, p. 56), being an efficient instrument not only for gathering information, but also for clarifying their senses and significances. In a purely physical sense, this model becomes a "system of principles, rules and means of knowledge and transformation of reality" (Zait and Spalanzani, 2006, p. 137). The NLP suppositions are associated with assumptions *imprinted* on the structure of an affirmation or subconscious beliefs, actions or convictions, being necessary in order to give sense to them and whose purpose is to allow the person inner development and perception of opportunities and advantages in new, different situations. "Knowing what the meta model means and how to react to them, the meta model can lead to an easier understanding of a person's profound structure" (Hall, 2007, p. 167).

## 5. Conclusions

In conclusion, NLP represents a set of methods and exercises that create a model of excellence. Its application can lead to a fundamental change in the quality of life and to the achievement of spectacular results. The methods used are very different: from changing thoughts, actions and feelings to tenacity, motivation, receptivity, to the needs and wishes of others. By practicing NLP we can take responsibility for our own motivation, a fascinating future and a personal way to achieve it. also, we build stronger relationships and persuasion capacity, neutralize negative experiences from the past, enhance self-appreciation and self-esteem, a positive, strong mental attitude and access to a great experience. (Andreas and Faulkner, 2008, p. 392).

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