

NLP Meta-Model - A Strategy for Developing Interpersonal Relationship among Business School Students

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ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the effectiveness of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) approaches, particularly the NLP Meta-Model, in improving the interpersonal communication abilities of business school students. By addressing deletions, distortions and generalization in language, the study investigates how the NLP Meta-Model enhances communication clarity, empathy, and comprehension. The study shows how NLP may improve interpersonal communication. It shows how the NLP Meta-Model improves communication clarity, empathy, and comprehension. The research emphasizes challenging assumptions, avoiding oversimplification, and considering other views in communication. This study contributes valuable insights to educators, students, and professionals seeking to enhance their communication skills.

Keywords: *Neuro Linguistic Programming, NLP Meta-model, Interpersonal Relationships, Interpersonal Communication, B-School Students*

According to Jacobson (1994) and McLendon (1989), the origins of Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) may be traced back to the University of California, Santa Cruz, in the 1970s. Richard Bandler, a mathematician and information scientist, in collaboration with John Grinder, a linguist, assumed crucial responsibilities as the primary creators of this technique. In addition to their contributions, Leslie Cameron-Bandler and Judith DeLozier, along with other prominent developers like Robert Dilts and David Gordon, played a significant role in supporting and enhancing their endeavours. Bandler and Grinder conducted an in-depth examination of prominent therapists such as Fritz Perls, Milton H. Erickson, and Virginia Satir over an extended duration. The researchers identified shared characteristics in therapeutic methodologies and developed core principles of NLP that were considered to have broad applicability across many forms of communication.

The phrase "Neuro-linguistic Programming" was originally used by Bandler and Grinder, including the systematic interrelationships that may be formed between an individual's internal experiences (neuro), their language (linguistics), and their observable behavioral patterns (programming). Although the developers of NLP have shown an interest in disciplines like neurology and computer programming, it is important to note that NLP does

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Received: August 22, 2023; Revision Received: September 01, 2023; Accepted: September 03, 2023

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not possess direct connections to either of these domains (Tosey & Mathison, 2003). NLP has been described using several definitions, like "the art of communication excellence" or "the study of the structure of subjective experience" (McWhirter, 1992), often seen in promotional literature pertaining to NLP.

An essential first phase in comprehending the fundamental nature of NLP and its utilization in augmenting interpersonal connections involves the interpretation of the significance of its principal terminology. The fundamental goal of NLP is to enable significant changes in individuals' viewpoints and actions. In 1980, Grinder and Bandler established a definition for the field of study known as "the study of subjective experience" (Dilts, Grinder, Bandler, & DeLozier, 1980), subsequently gaining widespread acceptance as the standard definition. Nevertheless, this depiction allows for potential uncertainty over the specific components encompassed under the domain of Neuro-linguistic Programming. Ready and Burton (2015) provide an alternate conceptualization of NLP, characterizing it as an exploration of the organization of one's subjective experience, an amalgamation of the art and science of communication, and a guidebook for understanding the workings of the human brain.

NLP is sometimes characterized as "the art and science of personal excellence," emphasizing its focus on the pursuit of individual achievement and improvement from an alternative standpoint. The term "art" is utilized to express the distinctiveness and personal touch that each creator brings to their interpretation, whereas "science" highlights the systematic approach to identifying patterns employed by exceptional individuals across diverse domains to attain exceptional results (O'Conner & Seymour, 2000, p. 1). As a consequence, the field of NLP has emerged through a process of thorough examination, using evidence-based methodologies from several academic disciplines and incorporating psychological foundations.

The 1979 publication 'Frogs Become Princes' by Bandler, and Grinder put out the proposition that therapists who attain superior effectiveness and establish a deep connection with their clients do so by virtue of a robust theoretical framework. The argument put forth by the individual implied that doing research on the therapists who provide the most favourable outcomes would uncover fundamental or universal principles that might be subjected to empirical examination and afterwards included in professional treatment methodologies. This endeavour is in accordance with current coaching research trends, which aim to develop shared principles and integrate coaching methodologies, shifting away from several unique coaching models towards a unified and all-encompassing approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knight, J. (2012) investigated the possible use of the NLP meta-model in the setting of qualitative interviews, building on the experiences of a PhD researcher and its use inside semi-structured interviews. Despite persistent criticism within academic circles, it is clear that practitioners in the education and training sectors see the model as a practical and effective instrument. The capture of useful data is the outcome of skilled questioning and avoiding excessive influence on participants. The NLP 'meta-questioning' paradigm emerges as a helpful tool for critical inquiry, providing a set of underlying principles and a framework (the operational principles) for upholding rigorous and, when appropriate, challenging questioning practices.

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Despite the numerous critiques of NLP and its meta-model, it is alive and well. This vibrancy is likely due to its practical application, as opposed to the frequently difficult effort of converting academic viewpoints into actual life events - until they crystallize into understandable models. The NLP meta-model should be seen as an excellent instrument for improving interviewing skills and assuring the maximum meaningfulness of obtained data.

Skinner, H., and Croft, R. (2009) conducted remarkable research evaluating the use of NLP-based treatments to improve communication and cooperation skills among undergraduate dissertation students. The researchers created a series of seminars that included NLP approaches, such as *How to Get Started: Well-Formed Outcomes and Action Plans to Achieve Them*. The findings showed that pupils' ability to define goals improved significantly. NLP provides a more detailed approach to goal setting than other frameworks with which business and management students may be already familiar, and it engages in constructive communication, implying that incorporating NLP methods can foster better interpersonal relationships among business school students.

Furthermore, Gökdere Çınar and Baykal (2021) investigated the influence of NLP approaches on nurse managers' conflict management and interpersonal problem-solving abilities. A mixed methods technique was used to conduct the research. To acquire quantitative data for the study, 41 nurse managers and nurses completed the Personal and Professional Characteristics Information Form, Interpersonal Problem-Solving Inventory, and Rahim Organisational Conflict Inventory-II. In focus-group interviews done before and six months after the training, semi-structured questionnaires were employed to obtain qualitative data. The content analysis of the qualitative data revealed that the nurse managers in the training group had enhanced planning abilities as well as higher flexibility, positivity, happiness, and motivation when compared to the nurse managers in the control group. Neuro-linguistic programming training can assist nurse supervisors in building interpersonal problem-solving and conflict-resolution abilities.

While these studies provide encouraging findings, it is crucial to note that the research on NLP in business education and interpersonal relationship development still needs to be improved. Various studies provide an important foundation, but the paucity of literature emphasizes the need for additional extensive and robust research to establish the usefulness and generalizability of NLP strategies in various circumstances. Research concentrating on the application of NLP in business education and interpersonal relationship development needs to be more extensive, highlighting the embryonic nature of this inquiry. A number of studies, however, have begun to shed light on the potential benefits of using NLP approaches in these circumstances, generating positive findings that highlight the promise of this approach.

NLP Meta-Model

The NLP meta-model was the first model to be developed by Bandler and Grinder (1975), introduced in detail in the book *The Structure of Magic – I* (1975). Its purpose was first to demonstrate how deletion, distortion, and generalization are used when experiences are translated into language and then to identify specific questions that can be asked to re-connect experience with language. Bandler and Grinder modelled the linguistic abilities of Virginia Satir, one of the primary forces behind family therapy; and Fritz Perls, a psychologist and the founder of Gestalt therapy; combined them with Grinder's research into transformational grammar to create the meta-model. Because "meta" can imply "above" or "beyond," the "meta-model" is a model that helps us clarify meaning by elevating ourselves above the

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connotations that language is attempting to communicate. In order to provide clarity for both the speaker and the listener, it attempts to rectify some of the inherent linguistic distortions that occur.

The model consists of thirteen patterns, each of which can be placed into one of three categories: generalization, deletion, or distortion. O'Connor (2001) includes examples of language that can be used to argue against each of these patterns, in addition to making suggestions about what to listen for and how to retrieve information that has been omitted. "...the purpose of the Meta Model is not to find the 'correct' answers, but rather to ask better questions – to broaden our map of the world rather than to locate the 'right map of the world' in other words. The objective of the Meta Model inquiry method is to assist in the localization of the 'deeper structure' of our conscious models of the world, as well as our unconscious assumptions and reference experiences (Robert Dilts, 2000; referenced in (Richardson, 2004, page 2).

Interpersonal Communication

The process of passing information and a shared understanding from one person to another is referred to as interpersonal communication. This type of communication is essential to the successful operation of any society or organization. As a result, it is crucial that it be managed competently in order to ensure that the objectives are met. Vardaman and Halterman define communication within an organization as the flow of information, materials, perceptions, and understandings among the various stakeholders of the organization, as well as all of the methods, media, and means of communication; all of the networks, channels, and systems of communication or organizational structure; and all interpersonal communication or person-to-person interchange. They incorporate all parts of communication and make it as thorough as possible because it indicates that a great deal of interaction is happening within the organization.

According to the findings of a study that was conducted by Cross and Parker (2004), employees who energized their teammates received better performance evaluations and were promoted more quickly. Reinsch and Gardner (2011) referenced the findings of a national poll of senior corporate executives to support their claim that employees with high interpersonal skills are given more consideration for promotions. In their research, Sandelands and Boudens (2000) revealed that "the meaning of work derives from the connections with coworkers, not from the work itself" (p. 46). They concluded that workers are more productive when they are happy and involved in their work. Companies who see the connection between employee engagement and the success of their business may look for strategies to encourage and facilitate the emotional well-being of their employees, thereby investing in developing interpersonal relationships between employees and hence providing employees with training in interpersonal communication is one strategy that may be utilized to encourage and support engagement on the job. It makes sound economic sense to support employees in developing positive connections with coworkers.

Lim, Cortina, and Magley (2008) took a different approach in their research, and they concluded that emotions of disrespect and lack of civility had a detrimental effect on job satisfaction and attitude towards work. Interpersonal relationships can have an impact on workers' feelings as well as the pathways they take in their careers. In other words, corporations frequently reward employees who have a favourable influence on the attitude of their coworkers towards work.

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Therefore, from a business school's perspective, it is essential to thoroughly plan and assess interpersonal connections, which is a critical factor for students and aspiring professionals in the field of business education. Matteson et al. (2016) argue that many academics are reluctant to explore the evaluation of soft skills due to the complex and elusive nature of these talents. As a result of this hesitancy, there is now a need for more comprehensive knowledge and expertise, which are crucial for the development of successful strategies, policies, and choices in the context of educational progress at institutions of higher education.

Neglecting the importance of soft skills not only diminishes the effectiveness of hard talents in the realm of job but also restricts prospects in other spheres and stages of life. The aforementioned disregard ultimately results in a lack of effective utilization of human resources.

The main objective of this research study is to offer insights derived from the discipline of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) on the facilitation of interpersonal interactions. Given the widespread adoption of NLP across various sectors, such as education and global corporations, it is possible to utilize its tools and techniques to tackle interpersonal relationship challenges effectively. These challenges are recognized as a crucial aspect of soft skills, and it is vital to equip future graduates with valuable strategies and techniques to cultivate essential life skills.

The implication of Metal-Model of NLP in interpersonal communication

Richard Bandler and John Grinder's 'Structure of Magic' (first edition, 1975) 2003 described the Meta model as the first formal model in NLP. They have seen how therapists who succeed at their craft use deliberate language patterns and analytical questions to zero in on the root of their client's problems and implement lasting solutions. The Meta model is a linguistic technique that connects language and experience through distortion, generalization, and deletion (Beaver, 1989). Internal, or deep structure, and external, or surface, language structures are used by NLP to facilitate communication between people and their surroundings. O'Connor (2000) describes the NLP Meta Model as consisting of 13 patterns that can be broken down into three broad categories: deletion, distortion, and generalization. O'Connor gives samples of language that fit each pattern and advice on spotting and recovering missing details to help readers better grasp these recurring themes. Using targeted queries, the Meta model has been shown to be effective at identifying language patterns that indicate the presence of oversimplification, distortion, or omission in a speaker's speech. People's words may misrepresent, leave out, or oversimplify aspects of a situation or problem when they address it and Meta-model's aim is to uncover the maps of the people's world.

Differences in how people absorb sensory data were revealed to be at the heart of the linguistic information gap. The neurological system is known to simplify and streamline reality perception by eliminating, distorting, and overgeneralizing sensory input. Parts of the mental map are sometimes eliminated before being communicated verbally; this process is known as "deletion." During a conversation, an NLP practitioner is able to identify and retrieve this missing information. On the other hand, distortion occurs when data is transformed in some way other than its initial state. The original data is retrieved after this is discovered and thoroughly discussed. Distortion, according to Carroll (2016), is "the process of representing parts of the model differently than how they were originally represented." Last but not least, we have generality, which is the act of making data more abstract in order to merge ideas. While talking, the specialist recovers lost data by fulfilling requirements.

Meta-Model Strategies for Interpersonal Communication

The Deletion Stage and Interpersonal Communication Solutions

In The Deletion Stage, comparative deletion happens when a person uses hypnotic words to establish a comparison but fails to describe what is being compared, leaving it unexplained. This is an example of using hypnotic language to generate a comparison. Unspecified verbs are verbs that do not fully specify the action or provide the entire information about the assertion. Examples of unspecified verbs include "to be," "to have," and "to have been." In this kind of situation, one can use their own experience to bridge the gap between them and the other person. The name "Ly" is mentioned at the very end. Adverbs are words that end in "ly," such as "slowly" or "creatively." Examples of adverbs include "slowly" and "creatively." Stoker (2014) claims that the issue with "ly" adverbs is that they make a judgement that other people have a tendency to accept without questioning whether or not it is accurate.

Nouns that are used in a sentence but do not receive a direct reference from the sentence's accompanying statement are referred to as unspecified nouns. Either none of the information should be included at all or it should be replaced with a pronoun that lacks definiteness. On the other hand, simple deletions refer to missing sentence elements that are necessary to the assertion that is being conveyed. These parts of the sentence may include words, phrases, or even entire clauses. In the case of uncertain nouns, the sentence contains an object that is only left ambiguous, yet, the simple deletion of such a noun would result in the loss of all information. Davis (2015) states that "simple deletions are where part of the meaning is left out or lost, and you can notice them in a sentence with "it" and "that" and also when referring to missing descriptions (adjectives)."

By providing advice on how to deal with unclear nouns, simple deletions, and uncertain nouns within the context of communication and understanding, the aforementioned meta-model phrase can be used to pose questions that lead to solutions for problems in interpersonal communication. Learning about undefined nouns helps readers recognize when crucial details are left out of a speech or a text. They are now able to ask questions to gain clarity or look for further information to ensure they have a thorough grasp of the situation.

The power of seemingly little omissions in communicating meaning is also highlighted. When it comes to communicating with your coworkers, finding and fixing missing sentence pieces is a must for success. Individuals can take the initiative to get the whole information needed to settle difficulties and avoid misunderstandings when they recognize when keywords, phrases, or clauses are missing. Furthermore, ambiguous nouns can add difficulty to interpersonal relationships. The term from the meta-model stresses the potential loss of knowledge if an ambiguous noun is simply removed. To solve such problems, people should try to make the ambiguous thing or idea clearer by either getting more information or offering more context. Better communication skills, fewer misunderstandings, and deeper connections between people can all result from raising awareness of ambiguous nouns, simple deletions, and ambiguous nouns.

By putting light on many linguistic elements that can affect communication and understanding, comparative deletion can be used to address interpersonal difficulties. It emphasizes the idea of comparative deletion, which occurs when people make comparisons without fully explaining or describing the things being compared. Individuals can become more attuned to situations where information is left unexplained if they are able to recognize this linguistic pattern and comprehend how hypnotic language can be used to establish

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comparisons. By realizing this, people are better able to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings, as well as the thoughts and feelings of others, and to address any unresolved interpersonal issues that may have arisen as a result of unclear comparisons made within their own minds. The ability to put oneself in another person's shoes is an essential skill for problem-solving and building rapport in many kinds of interactions, both professional and personal. This method can help people become more empathetic, which in turn improves their capacity to deal with both internal and external challenges.

In conclusion, comparative deletions shed light on linguistic features that bear on both individual and social concerns. Individuals can improve their communication skills, foster mutual understanding, and handle conflicts more skillfully in a variety of relationship dynamics if they are aware of and take steps to address comparative deletion, unspecified verbs, the "mind reading" technique, and the potential pitfalls of adverbs ending in "ly."

The Distortion Stage and Interpersonal Communication Solution:

The second essential phase of the Meta-model is called the distortion stage, which focuses on five major language patterns. These patterns are mind reading (1), lost performative (2), cause-effect pattern (3), complex equivalence (4), and linguistic Presuppositions (5).

Mind-reading - Reading someone else's mind occurs when an individual assumes without verifying that they are aware of what the other person is thinking or experiencing. It's possible that this phrase is implying that one might behave or choose not to act because you believe you know how the other person would react to whatever you do.

When a speaker expresses a personal belief but portrays it as if it were a universal reality, this results in lost performatives because it leads people to accept the concept without challenging it.

On the other hand, cause and effect patterns suggest that there is a temporal connection between the two events. This suggests that if one event takes place, it will inevitably lead to the occurrence of the second event.

The complicated equivalence linguistic pattern is the fourth major linguistic pattern in distortion. This pattern happens when two experiences, ideas, things, or meanings are considered as being synonymous with one another.

The final language pattern in distortion is called linguistic presupposition, and it is one of the most influential components of the Meta model language patterns. It is a reference to statements that, in order for the statement to make sense, it is necessary to assume that they are true. As a consequence of this, these statements are nothing more than speculations.

By fostering clarity, critical thinking, and a grasp of linguistic patterns that might distort communication, these ideas can address and overcome concerns with interpersonal exchanges.

These ideas, when used in interpersonal communication, can aid in the identification and resolution of misunderstandings and disputes between individuals. People are more likely to question their own views and seek confirmation or clarification when they consider the possibility of having to validate their assumptions about the thoughts and experiences of others. One's inner workings can be better understood by regular introspection and the practice

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of challenging one's own presuppositions. Because of this heightened awareness, people are better able to communicate with one another and overcome any internal barriers to understanding that may exist.

The idea of lost performatives is significant in intercultural communication. It is difficult to have an honest conversation when one person is presenting their own values as if they were shared by everyone. People can foster more accepting and accessible dialogue if they learn to identify and question outdated performatives. A more constructive and collaborative atmosphere for resolving interpersonal communication challenges can be created by encouraging others to question and critically scrutinize statements offered as universal realities. It makes it possible to hear and think about issues from multiple angles, which ultimately leads to a deeper and broader comprehension.

Interpersonal communication relationship solutions should also take into account complex patterns of cause and effect and equivalence. Misunderstandings and disagreements can be avoided if people stop seeing experiences and ideas as interchangeable or assume a loose cause-and-effect relationship. Individuals can approach interpersonal communication with more empathy and open-mindedness if they first recognize the complexity and uniqueness of each circumstance. When people can see things from another person's perspective, they can resolve conflicts and build stronger bonds with one another.

Finally, linguistic presupposition is an important idea for solving problems with both internal and external communication. Learning to identify when claims rest on assumptions is useful for separating reality from conjecture. Individuals can prevent misconceptions and engage in more accurate and meaningful conversation by questioning and requesting evidence or clarification for presupposed statements.

In conclusion, the ideas presented here give resources for dealing with and fixing communication problems both within and between groups. Individuals can improve their knowledge, reduce misconceptions, and promote healthier and more effective communication in personal and social interactions by encouraging verification, critical thinking, and awareness of linguistic patterns that might distort communication.

The Generalization Stage and Interpersonal Communication Solutions:

The generalization stage is the third phase of the Meta model. The modal operators and the universal quantifiers make up the two main components of the identification of this process. Modal operators are used to refer to the emotions that are linked with the successful completion of a task. Examples of this include the shift in attitude that occurs when switching from a task that you look forward to doing to one that you have no choice but to complete. There are two different kinds of modal operators, and they are called (1) necessity and (2) possibility. Modal operators must, by necessity, set rules that must be respected, with the consequences of breaking these rules being left open to interpretation. The modal operators of possibility, on the other hand, limit your flexibility by setting arbitrary barriers and imposing constraints on what you may and may not be able to achieve. Modal operators of possibility also limit your options. One such type of generalization is known as a universal quantifier, which takes a single instance or circumstance and applies it to all instances or at all times.

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Empathy, comprehension, and clear communication are all boosted when linguistic presuppositions are applied to interpersonal conflicts. People are able to identify and evaluate the employment of modal operators by others in interpersonal communication. To better understand the perspectives and objectives of others, it helps to realize that modal operators inevitably establish rules that must be adhered to and may have repercussions. Recognizing modal operators of possibility might help us understand the constraints and roadblocks we place on ourselves and others. Having this knowledge allows people to work together to overcome limitations and find solutions to interpersonal problems that benefit both parties, which can lead to more empathetic and supportive communication.

Furthermore, the idea of universal quantifiers can be applicable in dealing with social problems. Universal quantifiers help people avoid making hasty, uninformed judgements about others by requiring them to apply a single occurrence or circumstance to all instances or at all times. As a result, people are better able to empathize with one another, and misunderstandings and conflicts that could have resulted from oversimplification are avoided.

The notions of modal operators and universal quantifiers, in conclusion, can be applied to both individual and social problems. These ideas encourage introspection, question preconceived notions, and pave the way for development on an individual level. Recognizing the validity of different points of view and avoiding oversimplification are two ways in which they foster positive interpersonal relationships and facilitate clear communication. Better relationships and growth as an individual are possible results of adopting these ideas and putting them into practice in one's daily life.

The utilization of the Meta model within the context of counselling or therapy is governed by a set of specified criteria that are accessible to psychologists and NLP practitioners. Numerous human limiting variables, such as a lack of knowledge or competence, individual judgement, and inaccuracy, are certain to contribute to this process. These human limiting variables have the potential to have either a direct or indirect impact on the result of applying the Meta Model.

CONCLUSION

The article highlights the value of NLP, especially the NLP Meta-Model, in increasing the interpersonal communication abilities of business school students. The Meta-Model provides a methodical strategy for enhancing clarity in communication, as well as empathy and comprehension, through the process of locating and eliminating linguistic distortions. The study helps educators, students, and professionals strengthen their communication skills, which in turn fosters stronger interpersonal interactions and success in a variety of circumstances.

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Acknowledgement

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Haldankar, R. (2023). NLP Meta-Model - A Strategy for Developing Interpersonal Relationship among Business School Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(3), 2899-2909. DIP:18.01.275.20231103, DOI:10.25215/1103.275