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# NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING TECHNIQUES FOR PERFECTING PRESENTATION SKILLS

DANIELA ILIEVA-KOLEVA  
RADOSTIN VAZOV

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present the Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) communication techniques which can be used by people in business or in academia. NLP gives reasonable and affordable solutions to a variety of communication problems. It provides suggestions for further individual improvement and research. Through this practical discipline people can achieve more flexible thinking, self-discovery, and develop their communication strategies and presentation skills. The author aims to critically distinguish between the NLP techniques for perfecting presentation skills and the NLP techniques used for other problematic areas. The research methodology includes an overview of the different methods NLP uses to enhance modelling practices, behavioral development and strategic understanding. The paper highlights the NLP strengths and varieties of instruments, techniques and processes to improve presentation skills and to bring them on another level.

**KEYWORDS:** presentations, presentation skills, communication, Neuro-linguistic programming, NLP, development, management, interpersonal communication.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) was created in the early 70s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States by Richard Bandler and John Grinder with the cooperation of a large group of professionals, including Milton Erickson, Virginia Satir, Robert Dilts and Judith Delozie. The basis of NLP stands in retrieving a model of high professionals in their field and establishing how they do what they do (even if the person in question does not know what he actually does).

The motivation to write about this topic comes from the fact that the author of the paper is a certified master practitioner of NLP and uses NLP techniques on a daily basis in the teaching process, in the business practice, as well as in therapy sessions.

Everyone has a model of the world based on their values, beliefs, behavior, experience, etc. This is an individual model, which differs from the other, in a certain aspect, or completely. The reason is that the experience each person has acquired is different, and therefore the ways in which he interprets these experiences are different. Even people who shared the same experience perceive and remember things differently. A song or a picture can create totally different feelings, moods, emotions and reactions in different people because of the individual response to them.

The institute of Neuro - Linguistic Programming gives the following definition of the term: "Neuro -Linguistic Programming (NLP) is an exploration and change in the real-life behavior through a set of principles, techniques and behavioral techniques. It allows people to change, adopt or eliminate habits and offers a choice for everyones rational, emotional and physical status". This definition reveals the nature and purpose of the use of NLP.

Analyzing these definitions of NLP can draw the following conclusion: NLP is a model that explores the links between the way the physiology and the brain work (neuro), how we use the words (linguistic), and the accepted patterns of behavior (programming). In other words, NLP is a set of models that make up the approach to success that can be applied in every sphere of reality and most important – in business.

The attractiveness of NLP comes from its interdisciplinarity, and the complex process in which the orderly and systematic components of other areas are related to the business practice.

In recent years, specific directions in the development of NLP include links to the typology of the Myers - Briggs, problem solving, training in interpersonal relations, leadership, self-improvement, establishing strategies and skills to influence.

The basic attitude is curiosity. Curiosity asks "How do they do it? How to achieve such results?" for people who do something very professionally and with remarkable skill.

Broadly speaking, the theory and practice of NLP helps in:

- establishing and improving personal relationships;
- developing talent for persuasion;
- transition to a positive perception of the world;
- increasing the level of self-esteem;
- overcoming the consequences of negative experiences in the past;
- focusing on objectives and mobilization of internal forces for their achievement;
- acting with maximum efficiency;
- managing feelings;
- coordinating the objective personal beliefs and values;
- removal of unwanted habits;
- improved relationships with clients and colleagues;
- faith in oneself;
- applying a creative approach to problems;
- effectively managing personal time;
- the development of such qualities and character traits that arouse admiration for others;
- more pleasure from life

## 2. NLP TECHNIQUES FOR PERFECTING PRESENTATION SKILLS

This paper will briefly look at NLP techniques which could be useful in improving presentation skills and will present a more detailed analysis of the techniques are more relevant in the process of perfecting presentation skills:

- Meta model are specific meta questions used in the detection of limiting beliefs. At its core is a study of the linguistic models to detect unconscious constraints, violations and generalizations. There are twelve such models, and each of them has different questions to identify limiting beliefs.
- Reframing (also called change of frame) is used in removing negative statements about someone or something. The technique is often used to reframe a certain context so that the other person can reframe his perception about it as well.
- Rapport - this technique is used in establishing rapport. The essence of rapport is a copy of the external aspects and the condition of the person one communicates with and its further adaptation to change the internal state. One of the concepts of neuro-linguistic programming, which can be applied to improve presentation skills is that people perceive better people who are alike and become attached to alike. It is therefore necessary when an individual wants to appeal to a person or audience to strive to "look like" them, to unify with them - given not only the tone of voice or gestures, but also body language, facial expression, gesture, and other broadcast verbal and nonverbal signals.
- Using this approach, the presenter may involve the audience more quickly, making the audience like and sympathize with him. Alignment should not be done immediately, but gradually, partly because the individual who practices it can out of its so-called."comfort zone.»
- Calibration is used to raise awareness about their own situation and others. Calibration is the careful monitoring of the oponent and oneself and adapting to the physical and emotional state in order to study the body language.
- Stories and metaphors are used in the form of indirect communication. The application of the technique lies in the attempt to find common solutions.
- Embedded commands is a hypnotic NLP technique. It is used as an impact on the behavior.

Today NLP is taught and practiced by millions of people around the world in almost all spheres of human activity - management, sales, marketing, public relations, education, therapy, gender relations, military, politics, special services, sports, and of course relating to each individual's personal development.

More and more leading companies worldwide seek the benefits of NLP, and Ronald Reagan was the first politician to hire NLP consultants. Boris Yeltsin also used specialists in NLP techniques in communication during election campaigns.

## 2.1. Modelling

The basis of the method of NLP is a methodology called “modelling” which Richard Bandler and John Grinder used to explain the known scientific experiments of Milton Erickson, Fritz Perls and the family therapist Virginia Satir. The process of modelling is to study people who are examples of excellent performance, to ask questions and to monitor whether doing the same thing, other individuals will achieve the same results.

The philosophy of NLP, shown below, indicates that it can be used to improve presentation skills.

-“... Our thoughts and experiences are reflected in physiological and gestures, body movement, eyes, head, breathing, tone, strength, tone of speech. Watching them change and we can influence our subjective experiences setting.”

-“... Our inner experiences are reflected in the language that we speak. By changing the way you talk, we can modify not only their own subjective experiences, but also the feelings and reactions of others.”

-“... We can change and direct their own thoughts and behavior, and that of others in our desired direction, as the computer is programmed to do certain things.”

It is believed that any action of the people, regardless of how complex, can be reduced to a specific structure to be repeated by other people, if given this structure as a behavioral model. The aim is to create an effective pattern of successful individuals, and this model can be used for “programming” of others who would like to use it.

The effective implementation of this method in business requires consideration of such important aspects as management goals and objectives, management styles, work motivation and resistance, skillful and effective communication and persuasion.

Modelling detection means and describes the basic elements and processes through which people go to do something. The process begins with the identification and the study of the human model. This is an individual who does something in a particular, usually highly skilled manner (a model). For example, if someone wants to know how to be very successful in presenting (a modeller), he has to find a proven expert who knows how to present extremely well. Then the modeler should ask a lot of questions about what the model does, why he does what works and what does not, etc. At the same time the process of modelling often will lead to new and more relevant questions to be asked in the process operation. The addition the above mentioned NLP techniques make it possible to discover much of what makes this human model, even things about which the model is not even aware of.

When the whole process is done properly, using the time and technology and applying sensible logic, the result will be a new business model. This new model is actually a set of instructions. If it is good, it can be used by anyone who wants to duplicate the skills and abilities of the human model used as the initial subject. In other words, anyone can be so good at anything if a highly professional model is used. Of course, this requires effort and practice, but they are much less than if a training is applied or other more traditional ways of perfecting a skill.

Modelling involves a process of observation:

1. Monitoring the physiology of the model.
2. Study the language the model uses (words, structure of the speaking and performance).
3. Study the thinking of the model.

A notable element of the modelling is that if the modeller accepts the model’s physiology, uses the language in the same way and applies the structure of thinking in the same way, the modeller will get very similar results to the ones of the model.

Modelling is an approach similar to the four- model for success. It involves the use of sensory acuity and flexibility in terms of change. Moreover, the approach is based on the differences - what is the thing that makes a man different and that affects his behavior, his success or failure. In other words, what is the difference that makes the difference? This model does not attempt to answer the question why, but rather the question of how.

Thus, according to the model, successful presentation will be the result of continuous feedback between the model and the modeller and the actions taken to achieve the excellence.

When modelling an excellent presenter, the modeller should keep in mind that very often the model is not aware of what exactly he is doing, because perfection requires possession of unconscious competence. After achieving approximately the same results as the model, the modeler has to start making changes until he finds the best strategy for achieving

results and presentation skills. If removing an element affects performance, it may be the key to achieving better results and to build on a better strategy. Thus, the idea of modelling is open for constant refinement.

The process of modelling presentation skills goes through several stages:

1. First we need an excellent presenter who serves as a model. It is not important whether the model is good in other skills, or whether he is only a good presenter. Next is to have access to this model – we need to make sure that the possibility of careful observation exists, possibly without the model feeling watched. If there is an opportunity to talk with the model, one may reveal the values and beliefs that support the particular skill – the presentation skill.
2. The next elements of the modelling is to observe how the model applies their skills by “absorbing” the sequence.
3. Then, the modeler must take the role of the model, but dissociated - as if seen from the side.
4. Next step is for the modeler to repeat the sequence of steps of the model, but looking through his own eyes and feeling what it would be until the same modelling skill is applied. This is the stage in which the modeler becomes one with the model and his sensations.

One could never achieve complete perfection. But nothing can go wrong when one imitates because imitation is also a process of learning.

### **Advantages and disadvantages of modelling**

The modelling process has undeniable advantages, namely the ability to draw a perfect model for each action. In the context of improving the presentation skills modelling promotes improvements in many empirical researched presentation skills.

The disadvantages of the method stem from the subjectivity of the overall approach, as each individual has a perception of what is happening in the surrounding environment. Even with a perfect role model, modelling always brings its own experience and the model undergoes changes.

## **2.2. Representative systems**

There are people who attend a presentation, because they respect the speaker - knowing that they will learn something useful and will be entertained. But the main reason why someone chooses a presentation is that they are interested in the content of the message. Presenters must ensure that words work for them in the transmission of the message.

One of the important insights arising from the use of the representative systems, is how is it possible to have different ways of thinking and different ways of doing things. All people have different models of the world. Some prefer to see things, while others prefer to touch regardless of the context. Prior to realizing the enormous diversity of human experience, one might think that people are almost the same. But the more we learn about these distinctions, the more we realize how fundamentally different people actually are.

The NLP communication model presents the six things that a person can do in his mind at a time: (1) to see pictures - visual, (2) to hear sounds - auditory, (3) to have feelings - kinesthetic, (4) to talk to himself – auditory digital, (5) to smell or (6) to taste. The first four are the representative systems which are a dominant form in the culture.

Anyone can use all four representative systems, but generally people use one representative system more than others. It is most easy to call this the preferred representative system. Some prefer to think in pictures, others in sounds, third in feelings and fourth in words - through conversation with themselves or logical analysis. The participants in a presentation want to receive information presented in a form that corresponds to their preferred representative system. Each audience is likely to have a mix of all four preferences. Perhaps they are not evenly distributed, but each is present to some degree.

## Classification of the representative systems

Each person uses the sensory organs to perceive the outside world, to study and to witness its transformation. Eyes, mouth, nose, ears, skin are the only point of contact with reality. The world offers an infinite variety of sensory events, but we can see only a small part of this diversity. And the part that is seen is filtered by a unique experience, culture, language, beliefs, values and assumptions of each individual person. Everyone lives in their unique reality based on individual experience and acts accordingly, relying on this reality, and the own model of the world.

Everyone uses the same neurological pathways for internal representation of the experience and for its direct experience. Same neurons generate electrochemical discharges that can be measured. Everyone uses their sensory organs with an external method to perceive the world, with an internal method to “the representation” (present) experiences himself. The methods for obtaining, maintaining and coding the information in the mind into pictures, sounds, feelings, smells and tastes are known as representative systems.

The visual system may be used by the external process when considering the world, or internal, as will appear. Similarly the auditory system can be divided into listening to external sounds or to internal. External kinesthetic include tactile sensations: touch, temperature, humidity. Internal kinesthetic includes internal memories of feelings, emotions, inner feelings of balance and awareness of the condition of the body. Tastes and olfactory system are also included in the kinesthetic system. They often serve as powerful and very fast associations with images, sounds and feelings associated with them.

Everyone uses all three (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) representative systems constantly while not realizing it equally and tends to favor one over the other. For example, many people have an inner voice that arises in the auditory system and creates internal dialogue.

Representational systems are not mutually exclusive. A person can be visualizing a scene in order to associate with the feelings and simultaneously the person can hear sounds, although it may be difficult to focus on all three systems at the same time. Any part of the thought process would still be unconscious.

## Visual preferred system

In presentations where it is necessary to convey information to people with visual preferred representative system, it is better to use visual language to display pictures, videos, brochures illustrated with photographs or diagrams, and to “paint” pictures with words (e.g. How do you see this?). The use of the words listed below in the context of the presentation can help affect this part of the audience which is with preferred visual perception.

**Figure 1.** Visual words

see	colored	insight	watch	image
view	view	reflect	show	spark
vision	dark	flicker	Light	delineation
look	It seems	illuminant	radiant	shine through
picture	disclose	burn out	bright	pierce
focus	filmy	imagine	shine	bright
review	misted	crystal clear	scene	transparent
perspective	glimpse	impenetrable	dim	specular
flashes	Peering	frame	muted	

Source: Shephard, J., Presenting Magically: Transform your stage presence with NLP”, NLP Bulgaria, 2010

## Auditory preferred system

For this part of the audience it is important how things sound. They love to hear others tell them, tell them stories, live or on audiotape. They are set up to capture the tone of voice that may be music to their ears or muffled sounds, or even ironic. They listen for others who speak “their language”. In the presentation to the auditory people it is important to sound good, supported by music, to apply rich tone of voice and to use words related to sounds (e.g. How does that sound?). The use of the words listed below in the context of the presentation, will help affect this part of the audience, which is preferably auditory perception.

**Figure 2.** Auditory words

hear	say	expressly	piercing	high
listen	snap	talk	cacophony	whisper
sound	vibrant	hard	noise	false
tone	rhythm	scrape	quiet	tact
accent	harmony	dialogue	melody	symphony
music	tune	hoarse	murmur	tell
call	disharmony	ding	chatter	reverberate
upset	melodic	euphony	rapport	rill
jingle		dissonance	soundless	tip

Source: Shephard, J., Presenting Magically: Transform your stage presence with NLP“, NLP Bulgaria, 2010

## Kinesthetic preferred system

These are the people in the audience who have more sense of things. In this type of presentation the presenter is allowed to use physical touch (through demonstrations, etc.), and using language based on the words of sensation (eg, Do you feel it?). The use of the words listed below in the context of presentations, affect the part of the audience, which is with preferred kinesthetic perception.

**Figure 3.** Kinesthetic words

feel	touch	smooth	solid	rough
grab	pressure	hard	tight	rigid
pull	handle	passionate	soft	move
get	texture	sting	hardy	stick
rub	heavy	contact	sharp	tickle
sticky	unshakable	scabby	rebound	gesture
hookup	glide	thick	stump	imitation
accept	slippery	totter	beat	excavate
warm	catch	obstacle	fling	collision

Source: Shephard, J., Presenting Magically: Transform your stage presence with NLP“, NLP Bulgaria, 2010

## Auditory – digital (digital audio) preferred system

So far there were presented three types of representative systems. But scientific studies have proven the existence of a fourth type of perception of the environmental reality - auditory digital. These are the people in the audience who most often speak for logic, search for sense and reasonableness of the information provided. They want facts confirming the numbers and statistics, theoretical assumptions presented by logical analysis and structured arguments. These inferences and applied trends are based on an extrapolation of the data in question (e.g. Can you tell me what you think?). The use of the words listed below in the context of the presentation affect this part of the audience which is with preferred auditory digital perception.

**Figure 4.** Auditory – digital words

main	specific	understand	idea	learning
procedure	interesting	integrated	interactive	modular
trend	obvious	growing	balanced	virtual
knowledge	random	enhanced	variable	added value
model	special	systematic	ecological	applications
theory	typical	optimum	border	flexibility
principle	common	compatible	reciprocal	concept
importance	excellent	paradigm	transitional	framework
	think	emergency	experience	logical

Source: Shephard, J., Presenting Magically: Transform your stage presence with NLP“, NLP Bulgaria, 2010

## Application of the representative systems

Every information presented passes through a number of compulsory stages: introduction, processing and evaluation. In this regard, there are three separate systems of activity of the human brain: a leading (data entry), preferred (presentation of information in the mind) and reference (evaluation of the information). Each of these systems can be represented visually, kinesthetically and auditory.

Each individual uses all channels of perception, even though depending on the situation he pays attention more to one channel than to another. For example the art gallery is located in the visual channel, the world of the concert - in the auditory. When we think, regardless of the subject of reflection, we always stick to one representative system.

Usually this preference occurs between the ages of 10 and 12 years. Many people can create clear mental images and think in pictures. For others it is more difficult. When a person has a tendency to stick to one channel of perception, then in NLP that channel is called a preferred system. In the presentation process taking into account the representative systems of the audience, helps the presenter to build a better image and to construct a better presentation is.

## Advantages and disadvantages of the application of the representative systems

The advantages of this technique of NLP stem from the fact that they give knowledge about all channels of perception, and this creates conditions for forming the content and structure of the presentation for clear and convincing speech, and also helps to simplify the communication messages.

Disadvantages of this technique are not known. However, there are people who perceive NLP as a very subjective method and the same distrust can be applied to the representative systems being part of NLP. Sometimes the usefulness of the technique is reduced because it is seen as complex and incomprehensible.

## CONCLUSION

The author of the paper believes that everyone can improve their presentation skills through the presented NLP techniques. NLP trainings are widely available but each individual can also improve his presentation skills through self-development. The modelling process requires a strong motivation and a lot of observation. The representative systems require a systematic study of the theoretical principles and constant application.

The effectiveness of modern managers requires on one hand - to keep up-to-date with the current global trends, to follow the development of new information and communication technologies, and on the other hand - to not underestimate the direct communication and direct contact with employees and other audiences, and that one of their most important functions is to motivate their subordinates - to face up to them, to inform them, to persuade, and to inspire others. This requires the presentation skills that can be called critical to the success of any manager in the modern era.

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### DETAILS ABOUT AUTHORS:

DANIELA ILIEVA-KOLEVA  
VUZF UNIVERSITY SOFIA  
SOFIA, BULGARIA  
dkoleva@city.academic.gr

RADOSTIN VAZOV  
VUZF UNIVERSITY SOFIA  
SOFIA, BULGARIA  
vazov\_rado@vuzf.bg