

Speech Acts and Hypnotic Protocols

by

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(In the paper, all male pronouns will refer to the feminine gender. The nominal pronoun will refer to the first author. The plural pronoun will apply to both authors.)

In the book, *Advanced Techniques of Hypnosis and Psychotherapy, Selected Papers of Milton H. Erickson*, edited by Jay Haley and published by Grune and Stratton 1969, is documented a fascinating case of pain control by Milton H. Erickson, M.D. The patient had a facial cancer.

Erickson had to work within certain constraints, the most trying ones were that there was to be no mention of “hypnosis” and one of the patient’s relatives was a resident who was singularly opposed to “hypnosis.” When Erickson finally works with the man, he utters a hypnotic protocol about the seed of a tomato plant that is put into the earth. The protocol delineates the subsequent growth of this seed. Out of the enunciation of this protocol this man eventually is free of pain from his cancer until the day he dies!

When we first read this paper in *Advanced Techniques*, our immediate response, was an admixture of astonishment and wonder, shock and utter confusion. There is an attempt by Erickson to explicate what he did. However, as I once shared with him, to do such an explication is impossible unless you can go meta to yourself and you have a metalanguage by which to do so. If he could have achieved the former, he certainly did not have the latter with which to accomplish such a goal.

To effect change is one thing; to communicate *about* this change is something else: above all, a problem of correct logical typing and of creating an adequate metalanguage. In psychotherapeutic research, it is very common to find that particularly gifted and intuitive therapists think they know why they are doing what they are doing, but their explanations simply do not hold water. Conversely, many gifted writers are astounded and even annoyed at the deeper meanings that others read into their works. Thus, while the former believe they know, but apparently do not, the latter seem to know more than they are willing to acknowledge - which brings us back to Laing: “If I don’t know I don’t know, I think I know; if I don’t know I know, I think I don’t know.”

Paul Watzlawick, John Weakland and Richard Fisch: *CHANGE* Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution W. W. Norton & Company Inc. 1974 p79.

It has taken us from 1977 to 1997 to elucidate the epistemological structure by which Erickson knew to apply the hypnotic protocol he did in the above case. We propose, in this paper:

1. to demonstrate it
2. to delineate the critical components of what was demonstrated
3. if we have time, to supervise you in the doing of what is predicated here so that you can satisfy yourself the truth and validity of the epistemic basis of Erickson's work that we have unravelled here.

DEMONSTRATION

We now know that the critical thing about hypnotic protocols of this threshold of Ericksonian finesse has its foundations in the work of John R. Searle.

The reason for concentrating on the subject of speech acts is simply this: all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts. The unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed the symbol, word or sentence, or even the token of the symbol or word or sentence, but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of the speech act. To take the token as a message is to take it as a produced or issued token. More precisely, the production or the issuance of a sentence token under certain conditions is a speech act, and speech acts (of certain kinds to be explained later) are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication.

John R. Searle: *Speech Acts* Cambridge University Press 1969 page 16.

We cite here some examples:

Linguistic Transform	Speech Act
Could you please come here?	Request
I am not putting up with this any more.	Assertion
I shall visit my mother.	Claim
You will sit down and shut up.	Command
What is the time?	Question

What we have discovered is that an aggregate of speech acts indexes the logical files of a semantic kernel or domain in which a speaker is in at that moment.

Linguistic Transforms	Speech Act	Semantic Kernel
When we were in Kuala Lumpur we were royally entertained.	Statement	Visit to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
It was “dinner” at lunch time and “dinner” at dinner time.	Statement	Form of dining during the visit.
There was not enough time to visit with everyone who wanted to see us.	Claim	Time problem during the visit.
To solve this problem we finally started to visit with people over breakfast and at tea time.	Assertion	Applied solution to the time problem of the visit.
Two weeks was just not enough time. Can you imagine how much weight we might have gained?	Statement Question	Time problem during the visit. A possible weight consequence.
So we went for morning walks. We determined that these walks would be for an least an hour long.	Statement	Action to solve the weight consequence of the visit.
Except for a quick trip to the town of Kajang to get Satay and a day visit to Malacca we stayed in Kuala Lumpur all the time..	Statement	Trips out of Kuala Lumpur

In the creation of such Special Hypnotic Protocols (as opposed to General Hypnotic Protocols), the critical piece is to determine the most valued scan of semantic domain or kernel favoured by an individual. Once it are identified, then all one needs to do is to either:

- 4. invert them as they are**
- 5. determine an analogous scan of these semantic kernels and then invert them to the subject. To do this, one is to isolate the critical semantic kernel out of the speech acts and infer its hierarchy of semantic sub- kernels and then invert them to the subject.**

In doing this, one is creating a coherent syntax of semantic kernels that matches the ontology and epistemology of the subject.

It is here that we believe, that as a function of time constraints, our paper is to end.

If we could have gone on, we would have proceeded to supervise the exercise as indexed below. For the goal of completion, we have extended this paper to cover the domain of consideration about the critical variables necessary to attain rapport.

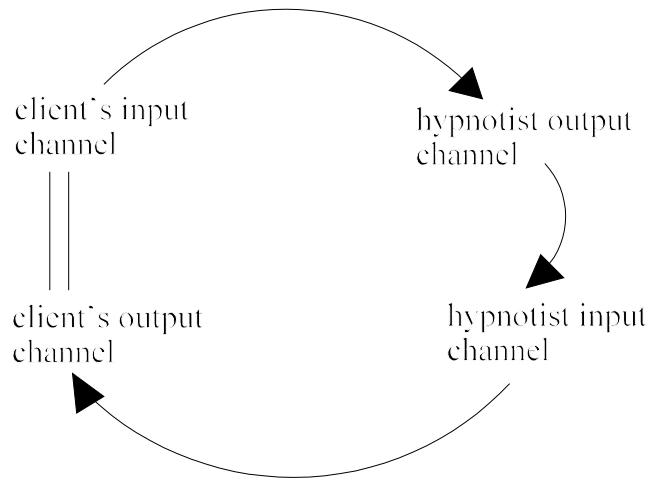
A EXERCISE TO DO AS ERICKSON DID

This is only possible if we have time. If we do, we would like you all to

- i. find a partner
- ii. ask your partner to tell you about himself
- iii. listen and pay attention to his speech acts
- iv. determine which semantic kernels his speech acts index
- v. satisfy the scan of what his semantic kernels are
- vi. determine whether you are going to use his scan of semantic kernels or whether you are going to use an analogous one
- vii. ask him to sit comfortably, breathe and relax
- viii. invert the scan of semantic kernels
- ix. read him as he goes into trance.

This part completes the logical basis of this paper:

The issue of matching and inverting the syntax of semantic kernels is only a part of the what is involved, however, in the communication cybernetic loop between an operator and his subject:



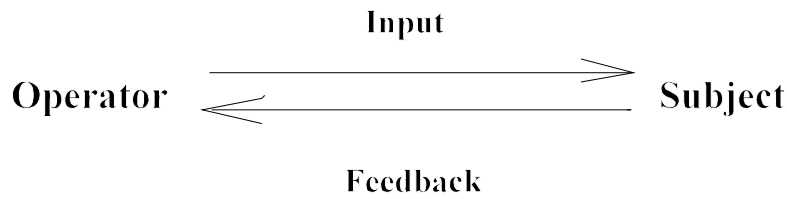
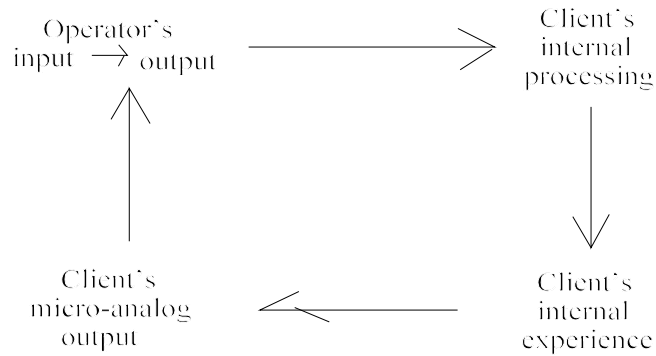


DIAGRAM FROM *HYPNOSIS - THE SCIENCE & THE ART, VOL. 1*

Also from the forthcoming publication, *HYPNOSIS, The Science & The Art*, we abstract for this paper the following:



**T h e
a b o v e
d i a g r a m
h a s a
n a t u r a l
c o u n t e r p**

art in the next diagram. It is taken from the work *Patterns of the Hypnotic Techniques of Milton H. Erickson M.D.* by Richard Bandler and John Grinder page 17. It is published by Meta Publications.

At another logical level what we are looking at is:

At one critical level of consideration, rapport is about how to match and phase in with another person. The question is, what is an operator to match and phase in with what in a subject? At another level of consideration, to have the answers to these questions clearly is about how to be a good and effective communicator.

In 1994, our work, *The Knife Without Pain*, delineated the critical elements for matching and phasing in with a client. This scan of considerations are re-delineated in our forthcoming publication:, *HYPNOSIS, The Science and The Art, Vol. 1*. They are:

1. I = Input sensory channel
2. R = Representational system
3. O = Output sensory channel
4. S = Scanning or sorting patterns (the EMPs).
5. S = Satir stances
6. F = Patterns of the semantic ill-Formedness
7. M = violation of Modified Meta Model violations
8. I = Informal logic patterns
9. S = Strategies of calibration
10. S = Sentient responses or states (s.r.) by adumbration
11. T = Time strategy patterns.

We abbreviated this list to IROSSFMISsT. Therefore, to truly attain rapport, one has to

match or phase in with a subject across the scan of this acronym. To do so is to open the doorway to powerfully creative and innovative hypnotic inductions. It is the answer to WHAT does an operator say that will connect with or phase in with his subject. It is the answer to HOW excellently an operator can be to connect with or phase in with his subject. This, of course will be a function of either his intuitive flair or a function of his training with an accredited competent trainer.

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