Neurolinguistic Programming – a Form of Social Semiotics

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Abstract: *The constructionist social semiotics that we propose in this paper understands social action from the perspective of communicative syntax, based on the concept of an interpretive adrift that takes place at the interface between emiter and receiver depending on the semantic context in which various constructs are formed and modified.*

In this paper, we will show that the origins of constructionist social semiotics can be found in neurolinguistic programming - namely in identifying sensory predominance and sensory channels as instances of the social and communicative construction of "reality" - as an intersubjective map applied to a "territory" built from social interactions. Social phenomena are symbolically approximated, which is why the semiotic interpretation of the social takes into account the predominantly subjective nature of the processes of self-construction and contraction of reality for the subject.

The article reviews a series of socio-anthropological elements related to sensory channels from the perspective of the social construction of reality and contributes to clarifying the role of NLP theories in the development of an epistemology and social constructionist semiotics, respectively.

Keywords: *neurolinguistic programming; NLP; sensory channels; social semiotics; visual; auditory; kinesthetic.*

How to cite: Sandu, A. (2022). Neurolinguistic Programming - a Form of Social Semiotics. *BRAIN. Broad Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience, 13*(2), 290-307. https://doi.org/10.18662/brain/13.2/344

1. Introduction

The constructionist social semiotics that we propose in this paper understands social action from the perspective of communicative syntax, based on the concept of an interpretive adrift that takes place at the interface between emiter and receiver depending on the semantic context in which various constructs are formed and modified.

In this paper, we will show that the origins of constructionist social semiotics can be found in neurolinguistic programming - namely in identifying sensory predominance and sensory channels as instances of the social and communicative construction of "reality" - as an intersubjective map applied to a "territory" built from social interactions. Social phenomena are symbolically approximated, which is why the semiotic interpretation of the social takes into account the predominantly subjective nature of the processes of self-construction and contraction of reality for the subject.

In the landscape of the latest theories on communication, a unique place is occupied by neurolinguistic programming. Complete and at the same time eclectic, NLP offers a set of methods and techniques designed to develop communication skills by going through certain stages, including the development of our ability to observe and perceive, and the ability to present our messages based on the information we have obtained in advance about our interlocutor or interlocutors (Sandu, 2021).

Neurolinguistic programming is an area of communication sciences, often considered to be on the border between science and pseudoscience, because there is very little evidence-based research to confirm or disprove a number of assumptions that exist in neurolinguistic programming, to clarify whether or not these elements of communicative specificity are valid, whether they represent characteristics of the human psyche or just simple forms of suggestion that a good communicator makes with the public.

The term neurolinguistic programming appeared in the 1970s in the Palo Alto School, in the United States, at the University of Palo Alto, an area where the specifics of human communication were studied quite intensely. NLP started from the semiotics of Ferdinand de Saussure and, also, from some studies on successful psychotherapists about how they performed in their communication activity, bringing to the forefront the discussions about communication, the perspective of subjects and the differences that arise in understanding messages through their sensory channels (Bandler & Grinder, 1975).

Bandler and Grinder (1975), the founders of NLP, show that we can approximate, in an abstract sense, the human brain as a biological

computational system, in which our behaviors would fit into the model of computer programs. Giving up non-ecological behavior can be equivalent to changing that program in the brain (Şurubaru, 2002).

The comparison of the "brain" (Bodenhamer & Hall, 2001) with a complex computational system denies the existence of consciousness on an ontological level, but is a good model for understanding the functioning of the mind, at least in terms of mental automatisms and the functioning of the subconscious. Pragmatically, we can talk about the "automation" of cognitive and operational structures, so that, at the level of interpersonal relationships, we might discuss about a neurocybernetic functionality of cognitive and attitudinal processes (Sandu, 2021).

Bandler and Grinder (1982) concluded that there are algorithms by which the human brain works, in a similar way to how computers are programmed, and that these algorithms are related to language, the way the brain processes natural language, and the authors assume a syntax. The internal brain is similar to a "machine code" on which computer programming was based at the biggining of computer science. This "machine code" would be somehow related to the functioning of sensory channels, as an interface between neural structures that provide conscious processing of data about the outside world and those that function at a deeper level, which is called the subconscious.

The idea of programming comes from the identification of repetitive structures in the functioning of cognitive processes, similar to algorithms that can be changed - and they are actually changed in the case of various psychotherapies. Neurolinguistic syntax is used as a way of exploring both conscious and subconscious activities, as neurolinguistic programming wished to be "a manual for the functioning of the brain" (Bodenhamer & Hall, 2001). This kind of programming is a revolution in understanding social semiotics (Sandu, 2012; Van Leeuwen, 2004), questioning the modern paradigm of communication that states that messages are universal and can be understood in the same way by all recipients, depending on the clarity and rationality of the message.

A presupposition of neurolinguistic programming is that we cannot help but to communicate. Obviously, everything that happens in our lives is communication. A teacher talking to students, a politician addressing a crowd, an influencer uploading a YouTube video or two young people declaring their love on a bench in the park - all these are examples of communication more or less institutionalized, the communicators assuming in turn the role of receiver and / or emiter.

The presence of a plant, for example, near an emiter, when they record a video for YouTube, is a form of communication. This is a more or less intentional form of communication. The plant does not have its own intentionality, but its simple presence communicates something about the people nearby, even if the message is implied and allows several interpretations - from the love for nature of the people in that habitat, to the lack of space. This conveys the fact that in that environment there is a person who takes care of that plant and who is a nature lover. This simple statement, resulting from a deduction, requires a series of clarifications: what does it mean that someone loves a plant, what does it mean that someone loves, in what contexts is love being defined - and whether the term love means the same thing in the context of loving a plant or an animal, of loving a person, of erotic or filial love, of love for the country, etc.

Interpretive contexts generate an interpretive adrift of the meaning of terms, and the simple presupposition that we cannot help but to communicate must be supplemented with one according to which the message is contextualy dependent and, implicitly, the communication context is part of the communication itself.

We wonder if there may still be semiotic contexts that are not involved in a communicative act. The situation when the receiver is missing could be such a context, for example, in the case of a hermit who lives in seclusion in a desert area and who, as such, does not meet any person. However, simply living in the desert is a semiotic intention that the person has - namely to communicate with the Divinity and, in an indirect way, with the whole world. From a semiotic perspective, we consider that the effective success of communication is not a pre-semiotic condition, in other words the non-existence of a receiver or the impossibility of communicating with them does not make communication non-existent, as intention or expression, but only as performative efficiency.

Returning to the example concerning the plant - can we consider that the existence of a plant in a jungle, in the absence of any human, is an act of communication, in the absence of any performative intention and any context of reception? The answer is ambivalent, if we limit communication strictly to the human experience, to a conscious communication, then it obviously does not exist, but if we extend the idea of communication to that of sending or receiving signals to the environment, then the existence of the plant signals, its own presence for animals that will consider it as a source of food or shelter, could be considered communication. In other words, the very idea of communication, which is what communication means, is context-dependent and, as such, is socially constructed.

2. Sensory channels as tools for the construction of semiotic subjectivism

By introducing the idea of sensory channels as a way to encode and decode the message, semiotic objectivism is called into question because NLP assumes that this process is subjective, each individual encoding or decoding messages in a way that is their own. Moreover, the messages that constitute social communication do not reflect social reality, but rather the representation that individuals build on it - that is, the map through which they represent their social reality. This presumption, expressed by the phrase "the map is not the same as the territory", is the starting point of the subjectivization of social sciences - including semiotics - a process that will be extended by social constructionism (Burr, 2015; Luckmann, 1991; Sandu & Unguru, 2017), that places the process of building meaning on social reality at an inter-subjective level, as a negotiation of the interpretations that the individuals involved in a communicative situation give to a certain construct, understood as a fragment of the social reality on which individuals try to obtain an interpretative agreement.

Each individual has their own "map" on social reality, which is the result of subjective experiences and how they are processed based on sensory dominance, the interpretive adrift that a construct suffers in various stages of communication, through pacing and leading processes – meaning the semantic reconfiguration of the meaning of some concepts due to the establishment of a relationship, a semantic convergence between emiter and receiver, which makes the receiver subject to the influence and persuasion exerted by the emiter.

Social-constructionism will carry forward this idea, establishing both a semiotics and a social epistemology that renounces the construct of objective reality - or in NLP language, of the territory of social reality – and all this is a meeting between maps, at the intersection of which constructs are formed, that have a particular meaning in each communicative process. Although we consider that we have a semantic constant - that is, we invariably understand the meaning of a term - we find that, in fact, in the communication process, we add elements that particularize the meaning and differ, more or less, depending on the context in which the definition occurs.

A certain notion is constructed through dialogue, otherwise the communicative context, which is necessary for the process of constructing the definition, does not exist - that is, for selecting the meanings in which we use a certain term. We will adjust the meaning given to the notion later,

according to other such dialogues, with other people, as we carry out our professional activity or as we participate in meetings, or as we become interested - or not - by a certain field.

We can illustrate this idea of the social construction of reality as a map that summarizes a territory by presenting the film "The Englishman who Went up a Hill but Came down a Mountain" (Monger, 1995). The film refers to a cartographer who, at the beginning of the twentieth century, had the mission to make a map of a region of Wales, mapping the landforms. He reached a locality whose inhabitants considered themselves "mountain people", but his measurements found that the landform harboring the locality did not come within the standard dimensions of a mountain, therefore, for the standard dimensions it had, at that time, it could only be considered a hill. Upon learning of this information, the residents of the community felt that their identity as mountain people was undermined - which brought them serious self-image discomfort. These inhabitants finally decided - and also implemented - the artificial elevation of the hill with the few meters that were missing, in order for their landform to be redefined as a mountain. Hence the title of the film - from the fact that the cartographer participated in the activity of elevating the hill to the height of a mountain, a mountain that he finally descended.

This process of creating meanings, through operations of successively defining these meanings, has profound effects not only in creating a map on external reality, but also on the construction of self-image, with the implications that this has on the psychic processes that affect the subject. Precisely these processes of identity construction-reconstruction through semiotic processes constitute the therapeutic side of social-constructionism, either in the form of neurolinguistic programming or in that of appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999; Cooperrider, 2008) or, in general, of narrative therapies.

The origin of this semiotic presupposition - according to which the map is not the same as the territory - lies in the Kantian subjective idealism (Kant, 2015), more precisely in the difference between noumenon and phenomenon, that the German philosopher highlights - or between the thing-in-itself and the phenomenon. In the constitution of the phenomenon, in the Kantian vision, there are processes of sensory reflection or, more precisely, processes of reflection of the thing-in-itself in various categories of sensitivity - including those of space, time, unity or multiplicity etc. The Kantian vision is transposed in the form of models of communicative practice - namely the decryption of messages based on sensory channels and

the understanding of metamodels for language, as instances of the social construction of a given reality.

The analogy with the film presented above concerns the common idea of neurolinguistic programming and social constructionism according to which the constructed social reality always undergoes constructive-reconstructive processes or, more precisely, we change the "reality" by changing our map about it. Many times we even change the so-called external reality, because we do not want to change our own map about it and we will act in such a way as to attenuate any signals that would call into question the correctness of our own mental map - even those signals which we consider come from reality itself. We change reality to fit the map.

If I talk about a person in terms like "he is my friend", I will behave with that person according to "my mind map", as I learned that I have to behave with a friend, by assigning to them qualities such as: an intelligent person, a beautiful person, a person who has many qualities in general. I make such evaluations because my mind map tells me that they are my friend and in order to feel comfortable with myself it is necessary to have friends "who have those traits that I appreciate". If at some point something upsets me about that friend, I start redrawing the map; this is the process of social change: redrawing the map.

We change reality as it appears to us by changing the map we have of that reality. In terms derived from narrative therapies (Neculau, 2022), instead of the map we talk about the story - which is actually the internalization of the map or the way we talk to ourselves about that map. Social reality is redefined in the semiotic consciousness as a map (Helmhout et al., 2009) - a complex system of signs that make social reality perceptible to consciousness, or as a metadiscourse / story, as a form in which consciousness takes note of the system of signs represented by the map. This map, which builds our reality, represents the way we operate, according to an inner mental path. But the map, be it mental, is a simplification of reality - that is, an approximation. Our approximation - or our own mental map - does not completely overlap with that of our interlocutors, and then it can be questioned.

Communicative action, as understood by Habermas (1984), can be redefined from the perspective of neurolinguistic social semiotics (Zolyan, 2019), as a process of redesigning mental maps, until an interpretative agreement is obtained - that is, a common map that we impose as reality itself. As an example, we can mention the idea of public welfare and the process of the social construction of this idea. Each person has their own definition of welfare. The concept of public welfare should be a map that in

reality intersects only in part with the particular maps of others. These maps should be made compatible through debate and dialogue, for example, when pursuing the construction of a public policy. The maps of a significant number of people will never actually overlap, but at least they will have to be made in such a way that they can be compatible – for example, a sea should not appear on our map, if a mountain appears on the map of others. By sea and mountain we mean not so much a landform, but s social phenomena of different amplitudes.

3. NLP as a form of social semiotics. Sensory channels

In the classical scheme of communication, we discuss about the **emiter** - the person speaking, including an institutional communicator -, and a **receiver** - the person to whom the message is addressed, the **message** itself and the **channels** (Sinisterra & Vicente, 2021)through which the message sent by the emiter reaches the receiver.

In neurolinguistic programming (Thomason, 1981), the channels through which the message reaches the receiver (Frankovský et al., 2019) are correlated with 3 of the 5 senses - auditory, visual and kinesthetic, the sense of taste, the tactile and the proprioceptive sense - tactile-kinesthetic (Gökdere Çinar & Baykal, 2022).

As for the receiver – they are presumed to be receptive, because pseudo-communications, when the receiver refuses the communication relationship, are often encountered, as they are attentive to completely different messages than those transmitted by the emiter. The intention of communication (Keezhatta, 2019) and the intention of reception are absolutely necessary elements for effective communication, although the axiomatic NLP shows us that it is impossible not to communicate, even if the message is unintentional - either for the emiter, or for the receiver (Knowles, 1983).

There are frequent communication situations when, despite the stated intention to communicate, the emiter does not talk to the receiver, the receiver does not listen to the sender and inefficient communication results (Yousaf et al., 2009). This is especially true in public communication, when either the emiter or the receiver focus on themselves and not on the message itself or on the feedback sent by the partner in communication.

Beyond perceptual goodwill - paying attention to the dialogue partner - another reason for the inefficiency of communication is the fact that the emiter transmits the message on a sensory channel that the receiver does not use at that time, or because that chanal is not sufficiently developed

for them at a neurological level, either because a large number of stimuli require their attention on another sensory channel.

It is also necessary to have a coherent message that has a meaning common to both the emiter and the receiver, either rational or emotional. In the absence of a common signifier, the message turns into noise - which confuses the sensory channel to the point where the attention of one of the dialogue partners is completely withdrawn from that sensory channel. Unfortunately, such situations appear frequently in the public discourse, generating the delegitimization of the emiter and a semiotic cleavage, manifested through the lack of trust in the dialogue partner.

The feedback loop should confirm to the emiter the receiver's communicative position towards their message, translated by messages such as: "You're talking nonsense", "I understood what you said", "I didn't understand anything", "I'm not interested in anything you say" and so on. For example, in courses, - online or face-to-face - after the discursive sequences, the teacher should have a feedback sequence from the audience. In didactic communication, you may not receive feedback, in which case the emiter may conclude that "I have spoken for myself", "I am the emiter, I am also the receiver", "I give myself a good feedback, because I like the way I spoke".

Unfortunately, the educational discourse - at least in Romanian - is often one-way, with many teachers speaking alone while students speak to each other. In a similar way, communication dysfunctions occur in the institutional, political, managerial or marital space.

4. Sensory channels in NLP

In neurolinguistic programming, three sensory channels are highlighted as follows:

• **The visual channel** – with its sense organ, the eyes. This channel gives the person most of the information that has an adaptive role, which is decrypted both as direct signals from the environment and as symbolic forms. From the perspective of language, the belief is created that "if you saw it with your own eyes then you know - you are convinced." This belief is a social construct with a legitimate purpose "I saw it on TV - so it's true." In verbal communication, the visual sensory channel helps to perceive the signals transmitted by the subconscious in a non-verbal manner, which can strengthen or contradict the main verbal message. Eye contact creates the communication climate and therefore asymmetric forms of communication, such as online communication - especially when the interlocutor / interlocutors do not expose themselves to the sender's gaze or only expose

themselves in the form of a virtual avatar -, transforming communication more and more in a simple exchange of messages, without the consistency of non-verbal communication. By analyzing signals transmitted non-verbally, we see beyond what the emiter wants to tell us and we see what they really tell us. We know, for example, whether a teacher is in a state of irritation or, on the contrary, of mental calm, thus allowing students to assess whether they will be more inclined to give higher or lower grades and the limits of their objectivity in assessment.

• **The auditory channel** (sense organ – the ears). This is the channel that humanity has learned the most to communicate with over time, because written communication has historically been less widespread and accessible only to certain social classes. Messages from simple signals are transmitted on this channel - such as the sound of a tulnic, announcing the danger from one hill to another, to the messages transmitted through articulate language. Communication through sound messages also works in the animal world, especially in higher mammals - dolphins, whales, primates - which modulate sounds differently in different situations. Therefore, we are talking about a pre-semiotic situation. Articulated language allows the use of the symbol - either in the basic sense, by attaching a meaning to a verbal signal (i.e., the word *mother* automatically generates, in many languages, the memory of the mother figure, but also a higher level symbolism that allows literary, philosophical, scientific and implicit reflection on one's own self and one's situation in the world).

• The tactile channel - includes sensations of pressure or temperature but also proprioceptive and kinesthetic sensations (about body position and movement) as well as sensations related to internal organs (pain) and, hence, related to body self-awareness. I presented in another paper (Sandu, 2010) the role of this sensory channel in self-construction as a differentiation of exteriority.

5. Sensory predicates and the interpretive adrift

Next we will discuss the so-called sensory predicates in neurolinguistic programming. The predicate term in NLP is different from that in philology and logic. For example, we speak of visual predicates when the transmitted message evokes something visual; even if it is transmitted verbally: it is a visual evocation. We are talking about bright, dark, yellow, green, colorful. All these are so-called visual predicates.

Many people put it this way: "I saw it. Because I saw it, therefore I know it". All this indicates a high probability that the person making these statements has a predominant visual communication. If they saw it, then

they know it. This means that their perception was realized on the visual channel. Then, if we want to improve what the other knows, we should be careful to communicate to them in such a way as to activate this visual channel and bring into discussion those visual predicates. We can tell this person, for example, "See what happened to me." Thus, we invite them to use their sensory channel. For example, the above expression withdraws the interlocutor from their own visual channel, moving them towards the tactile-kinesthetic, proprioceptive channel, the emphasis shifting from seeing to "feeling" - that is, to proprioception.

Thus, in NLP terms, a relationship was made between emiter and interlocutor - the emiter starting from the dominant sensory channel of the receiver, the visual, through the visual predicate "see" and then pacing and leading by bringing them to the proprioceptive tactile-kinesthetic channel, by referring to "What happened to me," that is, by reference to proprioception.

Apparently, it is impossible to see what happened inside another person, and this is why this is practically an invitation to empathize with their proprioception. "To see", in this situation, means "to remember"; because you know that the person has a predominant visual channel, if you will accompany the message with visual predicates, you can thus transform the message so as to activate the predominant sensory channel and help them receive the message more easily. For example, you could say, "One day there was a lot of light outside," and then continue with information on issues you actually want to pass on, even if apparently these details have no relevance to the public communication that was initiated. However, using these sensory references to the dominant channel, we determine those who are sensitive to receive the message better on this sensory channel, because it is their own way of receiving this message. Moreover, we should help the visual interlocutors perceive the message sent through gestures as expressive as possible, which accentuate the visual side of the message and keep the attention directed towards the message that was sent.

In the absence of such artifices, aimed at maintaining attention on the interlocutor's sensory channel and gradually extend it to the components of the message on other channels, the interlocutor will tend to break the rapport - come out of the cognitive resonance - and shift their attention from the message.

But if the person we are addressing has a predominance of auditory sensoriality (expressed through sentences such as "I heard.", "It's a little loud", "It's outrageous"), it will be important to address them on this channel, raising our voice, fluctuating the tone of our voice, etc., to always bring them back into the act of communication, possibly waking them from daydreaming.

Any communicative act, such as teaching, for example, should use as many sensory channels as possible. A teacher presents a message on the auditory channel, exposing it to students, with whom they also interact visually, either presenting a series of significant images or reinforcing the message through non-verbal elements designed to create visual anchors (through gestures that point to essential elements of the message) or auditory anchors (through modulations of voice, interruptions or involvement of students in conversation). Tactile-kinesthetic experience is less used in didactic communication and therefore learning strategies by discovery or performing exercises - learning by doing - is an important component of educational communication.

The use of sensory channels has been present in the culture of humanity since ancient times, sacred texts making frequent references to hearing: "he who has ears to hear, let him hear", to seeing - "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed", but also to the tactile sensory channel, when the apostle Thomas felt the wounds of the risen Jesus. Interestingly, the same gospel shows a dissonance between the sensory channels, the Apostle Thomas asking to touch - using the tactile sensory channel - while Jesus, although letting the Apostle touch Him, in order to feel the marks of his wounds, responds by referring to the visual sensory channel. We can consider that the two have different sensory predominances, which is why they use different sensory predicates, or that the author of the Gospel himself uses different sensory predicates precisely in order to address as many believers as possible, speaking to each one on their predominant channel.

Here are the NLP strategies that target the sensory channels, although they are considered recent discoveries in neuropsychology, that were addressed in the twentieth century, even if they were used in biblical texts, but also in the sacred texts of other religions in ancient times, to convey the religious message more easily. Visual, auditory or tactile-kinesthetic symbols are found as sacred symbols in various religions - we refer here to the eye of Horus or the third eye of Shiva (for the visual sensory channel) which symbolizes all-divine knowledge, the thunderous voice of the Divinity or the trumpets and angelic choirs that symbolize the sound manifestation of the Divinity or the initiatory touch that allows the transmission of grace / energy between master and disciple, between divine and human. The first two sensory channels, the visual and the auditory, are connected with the construction of meaning, which is why many religions are logocentric - the divine Word or Logos is either heard by prophets or spiritual persons, or discovered in written form - as in the tablets of Moses

or Vasugupta's Shiva Sutra. Even in the Bible or in other sacred texts we speak of these three channels, through which we can communicate not only between ourselves, but also with the Divinity.

The other two senses - smell and taste - are, from the point of view of NLP, integrated into the tactile-kinesthetic-proprioceptive sensory channel, due to the fact that these senses bring less significant information to the behavior of individuals, at least in the case of the human society, which bases its communication mainly on audible or visual signals.

In interpersonal communication, unlike communication between animals, for reasons of social politeness, olfactory communication was reduced to a minimum. For example, if a person smells bad, people do not listen to them. That is why perfume plays an important role in social communication, but for reasons of political correctness this is less publicly known and as such these sensory channels - gustatory and olfactory - are deficient for the establishment of complex sensory experience.

Signals from the environment are related to the sense of smell rather than symbolic messages, as they are scarcely semi-coded. Some perfumes send an emotional message to those around them, but today's society is less sensitive to such messages than, for example, certain traditional societies.

There are protesting currents that use certain partially repulsive smells as a form of social discourse, and there are sensory predicates – "something smells bad" - with derogatory meanings, but most of the time, messages of this nature are unintentional. There are also predicates - in the NLP sense - considered kinesthetic, but which refer to the olfactory sense with a depreciating role towards a human community, be it of an ethnic or cultural nature: "unwashed", "stinky" etc.

When the environmental or personal olfactory message is created intentionally, it aims to create an atmosphere and implicitly an emotional state favorable to communication.

In terms of taste, it is also important for the integration into the environment, but from a cultural point of view, as above, few communication strategies have been developed, which aim in particular at creating an atmosphere of facilitating communication rather than of transmitting a message itself. However, when using NLP techniques, which we will discuss later, related to anchoring - the association of a standard response with a repeated stimulus - olfactory or gustatory anchors are present both in the process of creating a conditioned response and in that of recalling a communicative context.

At the species level, people chose the auditory channel as the predominant channel, the message being transmitted through articulated

language. Over time, however, the articulated message disappears; either this happens a few seconds after its issuance, or a few years later. In order to preserve the messages, more precisely their semantics, humanity has in time developed another sensory channel, namely the visual one, the processes of meaning being transferred from the articulated language to the writing - at first ideographic writing, and only later alphabetical writing.

No semantics similar to the auditory or visual one has been developed on the tactile-kinesthetic channel, as such the messages transmitted on this channel have a pre-semiotic load rather than a rational, symbolic one. Messages such as those transmitted by a handshake or a caress, or other signals associated with this sensory channel, meant to create a state of well-being or, conversely, agitation, repulsion, etc., without a semantic load, are more easily to decrypt by the conscious mind, which processes the information coming through the sensory channels through linguistic sensitization tools and as such penetrates more easily to the subconscious level, where it transforms emotional information into attitudinal reactions or even immediate action / reaction. These emotional messages are of course transmitted through the other sensory channels - in the form of style figures, tone of voice etc., respectively the images that constitute the metatext.

The tactile-kinesthetic sensory channel, especially in its proprioceptive dimension, represents the predominant channel of ego construction and its positioning in relation to the other.

If I touch an object, I notice the limits of that object and I also notice the limits of the external world that touches me. This category also includes proprioception, the fact that I feel myself. The tactile channel emotionally accompanies a message transmitted by the other two sensory channels, visual and auditory. The semantic construction of the ego is based on limits that differentiate the self from the non-self - the child touches objects and these limit their ability to move their hand or body. This limitation generates the differentiation between self and non-self. The world becomes hostile because it opposes the freedom of action of the self. However, the feeling of self does not appear as a difference from the non-self, but as a simple finding of one's own presence - proprioception.

As such, this sensory channel contributes to the semantic construction of the difference between the perceived existential self and the social self - constructed through difference and the finding of limits. We can understand this semantic construction as a difference between oneself as a subjective experience of existence and ego as a socially constructed

experience of the interrelation between the perceiving subject and the external objects that are to be perceived.

Due to the exceptional role of this sensory channel, in the social construction of the self and the reality for the subject, the signals that the subjects transmit on this sensory channel have a deep impact on the dynamics of communication. When a citizen addresses a civil servant and they respond, while playing a Solitaire game: "I'm busy!" - the feeling that the subject feels precisely because of these emotional messages is unpleasant and limiting for communication. As such, in any form of public relations or of relating to the public, it is advisable to have an attitude based on messages that convey the other's acceptance and interest in communicating with us and the messages coming from us.

This presemiotic condition of acceptance of the other is reinforced by non-verbal language that includes tactile communication - shaking hands, tapping the shoulder, etc. The tactile sensory channel is much more important for successful communication than is usually thought, because we often say "I didn't feel this thing" or "I felt cold" in certain interactions. When we feel a person rejecting communication or, more importantly, rejecting us as interlocutors, the natural tendency is to break the semiotic agreement - called NLP repport - and then, regardless of the verbal communication style or visual elements that are used, communication is inefficient in the absence of a favorable emotional context - that is, of creating a relationship between emiter and receiver.

The message is an informational unit, being transmitted on different sensory channels, received especially from the perspective of the predominant sensory channel. If the emiter transmits an auditory message - and by an auditory message we do not mean only a verbal one, but one that uses auditory predicates, such as "sounds good", "it sounds" and so on - and the receiver is a tactile-kinesthetic person, the simple auditory message, without transmitting an emotion (for example, by modeling the voice, or by including small ironies in speech and which can be perceived on the kinesthetic channel) will be incomplete. In this case, the receiver will focus on the strictly rational part of the message, but will perceive it only partially because, despite the presumption of the exclusive rationality of communication, the communication process includes an emotional side related to the willingness to understand the message.

The influence of persuasion is largely linked to the kinesthetic channel either by creating specific emotions - by predicates such as: "that touches me deeply" or "that touched your soul", or that refer to "sweet", "fragrant", "comforting" with reference to people, voice, messages, etc.

When we try to communicate publicly (public speaking), this kinesthetic side is extremely important because it allows the receiver to perceive messages that we may not even intend to convey - about ourselves, about our subconscious and unconscious. These messages present us in a certain light to those who receive it and who associate our message with these perceptions about us. Thus, they judge the message as credible or not and considers us, as emiters, able to influence them or not - all this beyond the strict rationality of the message.

On each sensory channel a series of anchors can be built, defined as a strengthened conditioned reaction system. With each occurrence of a certain stimulus, a learned response will be triggered automatically. It is, for example, classic in NLP, that tactile anchoring in the form of touching a certain finger when a desired emotion appears will trigger the learned response. Subsequently, the simple repetition of the tactile signal brings with it the desired emotion in the form of a conditioned reflex. In practice, when, for example, a public speaker wants to eliminate their negative emotions about speaking in public, they anchor a positive emotion of self-confidence that they will reiterate through the anchored gesture whenever they are in front of an audience to which they must address. Such anchors can also be visual or auditory, a graphic sign - or a sound, a song, etc. -, reiterating such a state of mind. In this sense, we can talk about the modern use of mantras - a Buddhist or Hindu technique in origin, but it is used in NLP or mindfulness meditation techniques, including guided ones, as an anchor for states of peace, inner calm, relaxation etc., leading to states of deep trance or states of altered consciousness.

6. Conclusions

The elements of neurolinguistic programming presented in this paper and that are aimed at defining sensory channels - auditory, visual and kinesthetic - as particular dimensions of communication processes were identified as instances of the social construction of reality. The NLP theories that were in vogue in the 80's and 90's have fallen into disuse in recent years, in terms of psychotherapies that may derive from them, sometimes considered to have a pseudoscientific character, as empirically unverified theories. In our opinion, they can be revitalized and used in the design of a constructionist social semiotics due to the explanatory capacity that these theories have in terms of the genesis of the interpretive adrift that underlies the processes of sensitization - creation of meanings - in different interpretive contexts.

The present paper has a theoretical character, proposing a series of assumptions that could be later tested as hypotheses. The most important such assumption is that the process of interpretive adrift of a social construct is influenced by the sensory predominance of the sender and receiver and by the sensory channel on which the messages are mainly transmitted.

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