

Language Patterns

Using one hand, start with fingers, end with thumb underpinning the others. Each group has a theme, which is the aspect that needs to be challenged in order to ensure clear communication.



Missing information

- **Deletion** is when we leave something out of the surface structure.
"I'm uncomfortable" does not tell you what the speaker is uncomfortable about.
- **Comparisons** are when we use comparators to indicate differences without providing full information.
"He does a better job" implies that there is someone who does the job less well but does not tell us who they are.
- **Unspecified Referential Index** occurs when we don't give details of who did something.
"They built this house too quickly" does not tell us who *they* are.
- **Unspecified Verbs** are those process words that are not explicit enough to make the action clear.
"She hurt me" does not tell you how the *hurt* was done.
- **Nominalisations** are abstract nouns that arise when we turn a process into an event. Loving becomes love, trusting becomes trust.

Model of the World

- **Modal Operators** are the words that represent rules and boundaries to which we unconsciously adhere.
"We must have a holiday" implies that the future cannot exist without a holiday. *"We can't afford a holiday"* implies that there is no possibility of finding a way to pay for a holiday.
Must, should, ought, shouldn't, etc. are modal operators of **necessity** and can be challenged by asking *"What might happen if...?"*
Can't, won't, impossible, etc. are modal operators of **possibility** and can be challenged by asking *"What would happen if you did?"* or *"What stops you?"*
- **Lost Performatives** are generalisations about the world that the speaker has based on their own experiences. *"It's wrong to argue"* does not provide enough information about who has decided that it's wrong to argue.

Maximisations

- **Universal quantifiers** are generalisations. They may incorporate words such as all, always, never, none but may also be implied within the sentence pattern.
"Horses are always difficult to train" and *"Horses are difficult to train"*
Both indicate that there are no horses that are not difficult to train. The latter sentence pattern can also be classified as a General Referential Index - as in *"All horses . . ."*.
- **General Referential Index** occurs when we generalise an attribute of one thing or person onto a group of them.
"All dogs are vicious" is a generalisation based on a few incidents when some dogs were vicious.

Magic Thinking

- **Cause - Effect** are distortions where the sentence structure links two (or more) different concepts as if one causes the other.
"You make me angry" is a common cause-effect pattern - how can one person make another person angry when anger is a representation and an emotional state. The challenge to cause-effect statements usually begins with *"How...?"*
- **Complex Equivalence** is when two statements are linked so that they appear to be equivalent and mean the same thing.
"You're frowning; why are you cross?" implies that frowning is equivalent to being cross. The challenges might be *"How does frowning translate into cross?"* or *"How do you associate frowning with being cross?"*
- **Mind reading** is often an intuitive response to non-verbal clues. However, it may also be hallucination and/or projection of our feelings onto others.
"You are unhappy" or *"Can't you tell how unhappy I am"* both need to be challenged around the process by which the speaker identifies unhappiness and how they believe others will be using a similar process.

Presuppositions

- **Presuppositions** are the assumptions that are built into the words we use. They are things that must be true for the sentence to have meaning.
"Why don't you laugh more often?" presupposes that: there is a reason you don't laugh; you are capable of laughing; you don't laugh enough; and laughing more often is something you should do.