# MESSAGE STRUCTURE AND MECHANISM IN HYPNOTHERAPY COMMUNICATION (MILTON ERICKSON COMMUNICATION PATTERN OVERVIEW VIA HYPNOTIC LANGUAGE PATTERN)

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**Abstract:**
The purpose of this study is to describe, analyze, structure and mechanism of messages as well as models of interpersonal communication carried out in hypnotherapy as a method to overcome the problems felt by clients who experience psychosomatic health disorders, including stress, mental disorders, emotions and subconscious mind control so that appropriate treatment is needed. The theory used in this research is Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) to analyze the communication interaction between the hypnotherapist and the client. There are three concepts in CMM, namely management, coordination, and meaning. The research method is descriptive qualitative with a case study approach and constructivist paradigm. The results showed that the structure and mechanism of messages in hypnotherapy communication were carried out is messages produced were carried out implicitly, making arguments at the beginning of handling cases, the hypnotherapist puts himself in a position to accept whatever is conveyed or claimed, and the persuasive message conveyed by the therapist is wrong. In the process of compiling and delivering messages: the message is based on Milton Erickson's principles and philosophy, using indirect style and metaphors. At the same time, the Communication Model used in Ericksonian Hypnotherapy Communication consists of message design and interpersonal models. Message design is based on three basic logics of communication message design expressive, conventional, and rhetorical. The interpersonal model consists of social exchange, role, and interaction. The model of CMM theory produces the concept of BIER (Believe, Impressive, Entertainment, Repetition) and sense-making.

**Keywords**: Hypnotherapy, Message Structure, Message Design, Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM).

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the world, with all its progress in various fields, economic, political, social, cultural, health and others, brings various impacts on human life. From this, the tendency of life problems is increasingly complex and increasing, especially for those who live in urban areas, both big cities such as Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Medan and others, as well as supporting cities such as Bekasi, Tangerang, Depok and Bogor until in the end, many people experience boredom, stress because emotions are out of control and are unable to control their healthy thoughts. The increasing demands of life, especially the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacts various sectors, add to the complexity of life's problems. It increases stress levels that continue to grow (Susilo & Kemala, 2010).

Problems arise in the individual because he experiences something considered a burden on his mind, difficulties or obstacles that come from events or experiences that are felt. If what appears as a negative emotion, it will interfere with the joints of life because of the emergence of various problems that must be immediately resolved. Not infrequently, these complaints cause stress and health problems with various perceived effects such as headaches, nausea, lack of enthusiasm for activities, inferiority, and others. So, various efforts were made to overcome these problems both medically and non-medically. Many diseases are caused by human negligence, for example, due to not maintaining a healthy lifestyle or by attacks from outside, such as viruses, bacteria, and others. However, in addition to these two things, non-medical things cause the body to become "sick." Mental and emotional problems cause this disease, and the accumulation of the subconscious mind is called psychosomatic. Psychosomatic disorders are disease disorders with symptoms that resemble physical illness, and it is believed that there is a relationship between certain psychosocial events and the onset of these symptoms.

In this modern era, many have thought about how to overcome problems that arise from their mental, emotional and subconscious mind control. One of the ways to cure the disease is by doing hypnotherapy. By hypnotherapy, they try to overcome health problems or disorders by healing from the source or root. Not only does it heal the pain, but it heals the source that caused the pain. This therapy is based on the subconscious mind, which affects nine times greater than the conscious mind. The hypnotherapy practice is growing in Indonesia, as evidenced by the increasing number of hypnotherapy clinics offering hypnotherapy services in various areas, such as Bogor. The districts/cities with the largest population in Indonesia make the health aspect one of the things that need to be considered because health facilities and medical personnel are not evenly distributed in this region.

This has prompted the emergence of hypnotherapy clinics as an alternative healing method in addition to medical health clinics. The clinics operating and opening practices in the Bogor area include Bogor Hypno Center Clinic, Multitalent Solution Center Clinic, Mindful Hypnotherapy Institute Clinic, Boosh Medika Clinic, Hypnotherapy Center, and others. In general, the mechanism of action of hypnotherapy is closely related to the human brain's activity, which is very diverse in each condition. Hypnotherapy is one of the mind therapy techniques for clients who are experiencing problems within themselves as a result of prikosomatic disorders or mental disorders such as feeling less confident or inferior, revenge, trauma, and so on by using the hypnosis method, namely giving positive suggestions to the lower mind aware when a person is in a state of open critical factor area (trance) and usually occurs in the theta state. During this trance state, the subconscious mind receives positive suggestions helpful in the healing process, such as mental therapy, physical therapy, changing thoughts and feelings to be better and happier, relieving trauma, increasing self-confidence, maximizing brain and mental abilities etc.

The main element in the hypnotherapy process is communication through message interactions between the communicator (hypnotherapist) and the communicant (client who responds or reciprocates). However, several problems occur in the therapeutic process for the hypnotherapist and the patient. Problems that arise in the therapist include Fear because he does not master hypnotherapy techniques, feels incompetent or lacks confidence, has minimal flight hours, and is afraid of making mistakes. Another problem is the therapist's lack of understanding of the context of communication during therapy. For authoritarian and rigid clients with conventional techniques/methods, client complaints are handled in a direct general suggestion communication style (direct orders). At the same time, the problems that arise in clients include resistance or rejection when therapy is carried out because they are afraid of losing consciousness, afraid of personal secrets being revealed, fear of losing self-control, fear of failure or not being able to enter a

hypnotic state, Fear of losing memory after undergoing therapy, secondary gain, ambivalence, and lack of ability to understand verbal and nonverbal communication delivered by the therapist so that reciprocal messages are hampered.

Constraints from therapists and clients in the hypnotherapy process generally occur in the use of classical or conventional hypnotherapy, namely hypnotherapy techniques with standard stages starting from pre-induction, induction, and suggestion to termination, which is carried out generally to all clients. In hypnotherapy, in addition to using conventional techniques, there are also modern techniques initiated by Milton H. Erickson, a psychotherapist specializing in hypnotherapy and family therapy. He is a pioneer of modern clinical hypnotherapy who developed more permissive hypnotherapy techniques using hypnotic language patterns, analogies and metaphors. His technique changes the pattern of direct hypnotic suggestions to be indirect by using stories or imagery (Susilo & Kemala, 2010). Erickson thought of ways to get the client into a trance. He prefers to use indirect techniques and is more persuasive in bringing his clients into a trance without having to be overt with direct suggestions. Erickson also often uses metaphors or analogies through stories that touch the client's subconscious mind so that clients feel safe and comfortable to be more open (Kahija, 2007). Based on the explanation of the above phenomena, this study will discuss message structure and mechanism in hypnotherapy communication (milton erickson communication pattern overview via hypnotic language pattern).

**METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative and case study approach in the constructivist paradigm. Case studies allow researchers to retain real-life events' holistic and meaningful characteristics, such as real-life cycles (Yin, 2005). The unique characteristics of this case study research include: First, characteristics. In conventional hypnotherapy, the therapist has complete control over the client's activities with direct suggestion language patterns so that the client must follow the stages of the therapy process. This sometimes creates resistance from the client if he feels uncomfortable so that the client is difficult to enter into a trance state and the suggestions given are difficult to enter. Different things are found in the Ericksonian hypnotherapy model, which is more dynamic and flexible without being guided by standard clinical rules. Second, the historical background. Milton Erickson was a psychotherapist who revolutionized the understanding of the subconscious mind and was one of the pioneers in applying hypnosis as a therapeutic tool in clinical contexts. His breakthrough was able to cure many patients considered impossible by therapists at that time, so with this ability, he is considered the father of modern hypnotherapy.

Third, the context. The hypnotherapy method of the Erickosian model is related to the health aspects caused by psychosomatics or the constraints in the subconscious mind. This therapy can be done quickly and flexibly. There is no demand for focus or concentration on the suggestions given as long as verbal and nonverbal communication interactions are well established. Fourth, Informants. Many clinics offer hypnotherapy services to the public. They are found in almost every city/district, but not all hypnotherapists who are experts in conventional hypnotherapy master the Milton Erickson model. On the other hand, Ericksonian hypnotherapists can use conventional methods, so researchers need intensive time to obtain information. And data from competent informants in this field. Data collection was done by observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. The technique of data validity was source triangulation, namely by comparing and checking back the degree of trustworthiness of information obtained through different times and tools. Meanwhile, technical data analysis uses Miles and Huberman's water or flow model using data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions and verification (Salim, 2006).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The focus of this research on the message structure is formed by the hypnotherapist as a communicator to the client as the communicant so that the message can be conceptualized in a unique language and by the characteristics of the client then the message that has been conceptually by Milton Hyland Erickson can be adequately conveyed. CMM theory is the self and its relationship with others, which studies how an individual gives meaning to messages in interactions. According to the originator of this theory, communication is a process humans do together to create social events and realities. Communication between individuals can create a social reality about their world. In addition, every interaction in communication has consequences for life after the conversation, so it can be interpreted that the interactions carried out today can construct social realities that will occur the next day (Griffin, 2006). The series of hypnotherapy processes and interpersonal communication between hypnotherapists and clients in Milton Erickson's hypnotherapy can be presented as follows.

**Message structure in hypnotherapy interpersonal communication.** In implementing hypnotherapy, interpersonal communication occurs between the hypnotherapist as a communicator and the client as a communicant. For the message to be conveyed more efficiently, more focused, and more directed, the hypnotherapist must know the structure of the message to increase the client's trust and understanding. In addition, structured messages help the hypnotherapist to know the client's opinion about the content of the message and how to deliver the message in hypnotherapy communication. The message structure focuses on three topics: Drawing implicit conclusions, making arguments, and creating one-sided messages (BoVee-Akyurek et al., 2020).

The style of language in Ericksonian hypnotherapy is to use metaphors. The delivery of messages is not based on a memorized script or script. However, it spontaneously flows by looking at the client's resources, discussing his condition, associating with his feelings, and creating several possibilities. The subject, in this case, plays an active role in suggesting himself based on suggestions that come from within himself with the guidance and direction of the therapist. The strength of this indirect suggestion is that it is hard to resist and tends to be approved. The storytelling technique used by the therapist to the client resembles a mother telling a story to her child before going to bed so that the suggestions conveyed tend to be accepted by the client (Krylov et al., 2020). Things that agree take precedence in interaction rather than things that are contradictory because placing the position of the topic of agreement at the beginning will strengthen the acceptance of the message conveyed so that the communicant is more interested in the following message. Conversely, if, at the beginning of the communication, put forward contradictory things, the communicant will only discuss the following message (Hussain, 2021).

Communication interactions in Ericksonian hypnotherapy communication are more visible with wrong messages that allow differences in arguments between the hypnotherapist and the client. A client comes with various complaints and is often accompanied by beliefs or beliefs about something that is believed to be accurate, for example, feeling in the correct position, feeling higher, feeling more powerful, and so on. These assumptions in the world of therapy can cause physical health problems. Some people have trouble sleeping because they hold a grudge against their co-workers.

The concept of compiling messages so that they can influence others is first to grab their attention (attention), then generate their needs (needs), give instructions on how to satisfy those needs (satisfaction), described in his mind what advantages and disadvantages he will get if he does it. Apply or not apply our ideas (visualization) and encourage him to action (Ritonga, 2019). The approach taken by hypnotherapists to clients is Client-Centered therapy. This hypnotherapy session focuses on creating positive client experiences with various techniques according to the client's

resources. Client-Centered therapy ensures that therapy is carried out according to the wishes of the client as he expected, not due to outside influences or the wishes of others. This starts from the initial interview. The therapist listens a lot actively and empathizes with the client's complaints.

If you want to understand what someone means and feels, you need to listen with empathy and empathizing with others means feeling what others feel and seeing the world as seen by others (Rachayu & Banat, 2020). The therapist's empathetic attitude in hypnotherapy communication provokes the client's attention (Attention) so that they feel the need to convey all complaints or perceived disturbances so that the problem can be overcome or find a solution (need). The therapist provides understanding and instructions about hypnotherapy as a method to solve problems (satisfaction). To facilitate the client's understanding in finding solutions, a therapist often makes analogies or metaphors that are easy to digest, invites clients to think about what advantages and disadvantages they will get with the analogies made (visualization), and in the end, the therapist encourages the client to act (action) accordingly with an understanding or solutions that have been found.

**Communication models used in hypnotherapy.** The communication model in this study consists of a message design model and an interpersonal model. Message design is based on three basic logics of communication message design among them: expressive "during the therapy process, there is intense communication between the hypnotherapist and the client. Each party expresses itself through communication, both clients who convey various problems they feel and therapists who receive and respond to client complaints"; Conventional "in the implementation of hypnotherapy, each party conveys messages, ideas, ideas, perceptions and self-expression in the corridor of politeness and politeness by the norms and ethics that apply in society so that they can position themselves according to their position proportionally. Clients are given the freedom to be open to the therapist without hesitation, as well as the therapist to accept all these complaints and give an enthusiastic response so that communication and reciprocal interactions occur that respect and appreciate each other from the beginning of the interview (pre-therapy) until the completion of therapy"; Rhetorical "in the Ericksonian hypnotherapy process, the therapist is not rigid with formal and clinical standard rules, but he is required to be good at reading the situations and conditions shown by the client so that the message designed to be delivered to the client flexibly adapts to the client's resources."

The interpersonal communication model in Ericksonian hypnotherapy generally consists of social exchange, role, game, and interactional models. The researcher observed that clients came to the hypnotherapy clinic with various problems because they hoped their complaints or problems could be resolved (Warren, 1999). The need for problem solutions is the embodiment of the social exchange model. Furthermore, in the communication process between the hypnotherapist and the client, each plays a role according to the role that follows the flow as a "script." Clients who come with complaints or disturbances act as people who need help and have expectations that the problem can be overcome. In contrast, the therapist acts as the party being visited and must be ready to provide help by helping clients find solutions to each problem.

The role played by the client, and the hypnotherapist is a manifestation of the role model in interpersonal communication. Milton Erickson's communication pattern is an indirect suggestion, hypnotic language pattern, induction and assignment. Patterns of hypnotic language always avoid direct suggestions of the Authority type because this language style usually is less successful in changing people's thoughts and attitudes toward a proposition. This language pattern requires the communicator to bring the client to a comfortable atmosphere. The communicator can influence the client with empathic verbal communication (Kirmayer, 1988). This pattern creates an environment that is accepting, comfortable, and non-threatening and allows the client to fail or do something

wrong. All therapists are receptive to any message the client conveys and use these resources for therapy. Based on the author's research, seven hypnotic language patterns are often used in Ericksonian therapy (permissions, presupposition, splitting, linking, interpersonal, description, and truism).

This pattern creates an environment that is accepting, comfortable, and non-threatening and allows the client to fail or do something wrong. All therapists are receptive to any message the client conveys and use these resources for therapy. The hypnotherapist does not dispute or deny the client's statement, such as examples of sentences spoken by the therapist to clients who feel disturbed by the model's noise during the therapy session. This sentence pattern describes how the client enters an effortless trance state according to the resources that appear during therapy. The split technique is used by clinical therapists when clients want to be in control of the therapy process. The linking technique is done by connecting or combining two things, concepts or experiences that were initially unrelated. Things that are not connected become connected in this technique. Interpersonal communication from the therapist to the client is emphasized nonverbally so that it connects to other things. The language used is not specific because it can violate (empty language). In conveying the message, the therapist does not assume or guess the state being processed in the client. Truism Language Patterns are statements that appear to be accurate and do not ask for observations or guesses about what they are experiencing. They can also be interpreted as statements that sound true but are difficult to check.

Induction is an art of communication used by hypnotherapists to move the client's mind from the conscious to the subconscious by penetrating critical areas. When the body relaxes, the brain also relaxes so that the frequency of brain waves will drop from beta, alpha, then tetha (Holdevici & Crăciun, 2012). Breathing (focusing on the breath. Passing breath conditions, leading to a comfortable breath, then the therapist tells about the benefits of breathing). Drumming (Focus on the heartbeat accompanied by the beat of a musical instrument or a kind of drum, whichever affects each beat sooner or later. The therapist makes the client enjoy the beat, and the heart rhythm is associated with the beats). Magic Ball (Magic Ball induction technique is done with the palms facing each other, imagining the energy to form a small ball that was initially allowed to get bigger). Clients treated by the therapist generally receive assignments to be carried out after the therapy process. This assignment is a monitoring activity between the client and the therapist to monitor the client's progress, whether there has been progress towards a better condition by the purpose of therapy or there must be a follow-up to specific treatments according to what is experienced by the client. Examples of assignments given by the therapist are clients who are advised to do self-hypnosis, positive affirmations, and others.

**The relationship between Hypnotherapy and CMM theory.** CMM theory generally refers to how individuals establish rules for creating and interpreting the meaning and how these rules are interwoven in a conversation where meaning is always coordinated. The rules in this theory play an essential role in the communication that occurs in the hypnotherapy process. The rules not only help the therapist communicate with clients but also interpret messages communicated by others. The rules CMM theory consists of two rules: First, Constructive Rules, namely communicators interact to understand various events or messages conveyed by other people. Second, Regulatory Rules relate to how communicators react to and respond to messages they receive (Griffin et al., 2019). If examined more deeply, the Coordination Management Theory of meaning is comprehensive and general, with various terms, views, language ambiguity, and gaps in meaning differences to the exclusion of linguistics. The absence of parsimony makes the CMM theory not discuss specific things in a study. This theory can examine the interactions between individuals and individuals in a social

relationship and create meanings familiar to the communicators involved and not discussed under challenging meanings.

CMM theory only concerns value rather than understanding communicators, especially appreciation, participation and curiosity in conversation. The researcher found that when the therapy process was carried out, the client was able to follow the therapy process, understand and respond to the messages conveyed by the hypnotherapist when there were several essential elements that the researchers concluded as the BIER pattern (Belief, Impressive, Entertainment, and Repetition). Belief a person's belief is a factor that will be a tool to speed up or inhibit action. A client who comes to a hypnotherapist must believe that he can find a solution to the problems he is experiencing. He must also believe that his illness or health disorder can be cured. Another thing that is no less important is that a client must believe in the competence or expertise of the therapist who handles his complaint so that there is no doubt and resistance in him because if he is not sure and believes in the hypnotherapist then no matter how great the message is, the therapy process can be less than optimal (Daniel, 2017).

The word impressive is often encountered when communicating with other people. This word describes everything, both people, events and even certain moments that can give rise to a particular impression. In other words, impressive is used to express something so impressive or unique. In the hypnotherapy process, a hypnotherapist must be able to create and convey messages to clients with impressive language, namely language that can make the client a communicant impressed so that he wants to do an action or action he wants. A good communicator can convey messages well to the communicant so the message can be understood. When a client submits a complaint that is felt, the hypnotherapist is receptive to all the information. He responds to these complaints with positive words that encourage the client always to think positively, be enthusiastic in living life, and provide the enlightenment that every problem must come with a solution. Every disease must have a cure, and every test of life is a ladder to reach the glory of life.

Everything done consistently or repeatedly will enter the subconscious mind and become a habit (Gunawan, 2007). Everyone sees and understands that their actions have been adapted into mutually understandable sequences or patterns. If everyone knows what the partner is saying in the interaction, the conversation becomes a coordination that produces a message. The same message may mean different things to different people. To avoid this, people will work together to share meaning. The researcher found that there needs to be sense-making in every interaction as a basis for coordination to help form a general understanding and then build coordination between communicators.

## CONCLUSION

An important lesson that we can conclude from Ericksonian Hypnotherapy is the importance of paying attention to the language patterns we use in giving suggestions to bring the client into a trance state. Milton Erickson points to the need for openness to clients, nonverbal language, and a careful attitude in choosing the words spoken. Milton H. Erickson's thoughts and concepts provide an insight into the perspective of interpersonal communication in hypnotherapy, which has been therapist centered on becoming client-centered by empowering existing resources on the client. Concluded several things. First, if we can bring someone to their comfort, we can be sure to give suggestions/information that is persuasive or inviting effortlessly. Second, we will be able to have the ability to influence others when our verbal communication is preceded by empathic verbal communication. With this empathic communication, someone is comfortable discussing with us and makes emotional bridges between the person we are talking to and us. Third, our communication will be more powerful when we use hypnotic language patterns intended to be persuasive.

Regarding notic trance induction technique, a hypnotherapist needs patience, time, and careful attention to give judgment to the subject based on their personality and their attitude and emotional reactions. Establishing communication, respect, belief, and trust is needed in the therapy process. Respect for people facilitates therapy when using metaphors, indirect suggestions, and naturalistic induction. If, in the conventional model of hypnosis, the therapist turns a patient into a new, passive, and dominated being, then through the Milton Model, the opposite happens, namely hypnosis in hypnotherapy can be used. It must be used to acquire natural behaviors and reactions as innate from the subject, and in the end, Human behavior can be changed and studied in a controlled and scientific manner.

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