



LINGUISTIC EMPOWERMENT

Dr. Gilbert Brenson-Lazan
Amauta International, LLC

I- INTERNAL EMPOWERMENT

CORRESPONDENCE: There is a correct attribution of authorship and/or responsibility for each thought, feeling and action that has been mentioned. Without it, the protagonists do not assume their due responsibility, and the individuals or the collective groups stop developing their power optimally.

Not empowered: *July's goal has been met.* (A goal is not reached on its own; someone reaches it.)

Empowered: *The Region Five salesmen met the goal for July.*

N: *Maria makes me feel guilty when I am late.* (A person feels what he/she is willing or has learned to feel, not what another person dictates.)

E: *I feel guilty when Maria complains for me being late.*

N: *Juan got me drunk!* (A person cannot make another person get drunk; a person gets drunk him/herself.)

E: *I got drunk when I went out with Juan.*

N: *The interview went well.* (The interviewee was the author and the participant, not the object.)

E: *I presented a good interview.*

N: *I am bored because nobody invites me to go out.* (It is a false causality attribution)

E: *I really get bored when I isolate myself from others.*

N: *My criticism will make him feel bad.* (Each one decides whether to feel good or bad)

E: *He might feel bad if I criticize his way of managing the customer.*

N: *They flunked me on the test.* (The student is not the object, but the subject)

E: *I did not pass the test.*

N: *I did not finish because of lack of time.* ("Time" is not to be blamed.)

E: *I did not organize my time well.*

N: *You make me so happy!* (Nobody makes anyone else happy if the other is not willing to be happy.)

E: *I am very happy when I am with you!*

CAPACITY: There is a tacit or explicit mention of the most important perceptual and behavioral options—either potential or real. Any linguistic limitation of real options or capabilities of the individual or the group hinders the effectiveness of the system.

N: *I have to see Juan at 3:00.* (It is not an unavoidable obligation.)

E: *I am going to see Juan at 3:00.*

N: *I cannot talk to you now.* (It is not an inherent incapacity.)

E: *I'd rather not commit myself in talking to you now. Can we talk this afternoon?*

N: *We Latins are always late.* (Punctuality is a habit or a behavior, even when it is culturally reinforced, and it is not an inherent characteristic of a human being or a certain group)

E: *I think many of us are careless in the way we plan our time.*

N: *We have to call before leaving.* (It is not an absolute duty.)

E: *I think it is convenient to call before leaving.*

N: *Do you want to go tomorrow or on Friday?* (This may well be an illusion of alternatives and there might be more than two options.)

E: *When do you want to go?*

N: *I know what he wants.* (Nobody can know with certainty what the other person thinks, feels or wishes.)

E: *I think I know what he wants.*

N: *There was no way of finishing the work.* (Maybe there was.)

E: *I did not organize the work well enough to finish on time.*

N: *I have to stay with my little sister.* (It is the author of a commitment, not a victim of it.)

E: *I promised to stay with my little sister.*

N: *It is impossible to talk to the manager.* (It may be very difficult, but not impossible.)

E: *The manager has not yet given us an appointment.*

N: *I know what he is going to tell me.* (How?)

E: *I can just imagine what he is going to tell me.*

CLARITY: There is explanation, agreement or co-creation of the significance of what is being said. Each person “knows” what the words mean; the difficulty emerges when the knowledge is different.

N: *Can you give me that watchamacallit over there.* (Is that word in the dictionary?)

E: *Can you hand me the tape recorder that is in the left drawer, please.*

N: *She is always showing a lack of respect.* (“Respect” can have many meanings.)

E: *I don’t like how she responds to the customers.*

N: *The decision was already made.* (Who made it?)

E: *The manager made the decision yesterday.*

N: *A bunch of people arrived.* (Is a “bunch” more or less than a “whole lot”?)

E: *Fifty people more than we were expecting arrived.*

N: *She has a depression.* (Has it been clinically diagnosed as something she “has”?)

E: *She gets depressed when the kids don’t come to visit her.*

N: *Trusting is difficult.* (Gerands can be very vague. “Difficult” for whom?)

E: *It is difficult for me to trust my supervisor.*

N: *I will be in touch.* (How? When?)

E: *I will call you next Thursday.*

N: *I have tried to find out where that software is sold.* (But we don’t know what s(he) did?)

E: *I have called the supplier three times and the line is always busy.*

N: *He has been a failure.* (Is he a failure or has he failed at something?)

E: *He has failed several employment exams.*

N: *Everybody knows.* (Who is everybody?)

E: *The people in his office have realized that he and his secretary are dating.*

COHERENCE: There is semiotic agreement (between the verbal and the non-verbal channels), a syntactic consistency (between the parts of the sentence), and contextual consistency (within which the sentence is pronounced).

N: *I want to sell more but competition is tough.* (The conjunction “but” has the effect of negating what has been previously affirmed.)

E: *I want to sell more in spite of the tough competition.*

N: *Don’t you think it would be better to do this tomorrow?* (It is an affirmation masked as a question.)

E: *I think it is better to do this tomorrow. What do you think?*

Question: *What do you want to do tomorrow?*

N: *What I don't want to do is staying home.* (It is a para-response that states what s(he) doesn't want instead of what s(he) wants.)

E: *I'd like to go to the lake for a picnic.*

N: *He's as lazy as his father?.* (The veracity of the point of comparison has not been established: the supposed laziness of the father.)

E: *I see he has little initiative.*

N: (to the employee who comes half an hour late in the morning) *Good afternoon, Miss Lopez!* (This is an indirect or sarcastic accusation.)

E: *Good morning, Miss Lopez. Would you please tell me why you were late?*

N: *I know I made a mistake in the date, but the people in Production did not verify that for me.* (The "but" disqualifies the recognition of the mistake.)

E: *I know I made a mistake in the date. It would help me in the future if I could have more support from Production.*

Stimulus: *You assembled the piece wrongly.*

N: *I tried to do it right.* (No one doubts about the good intention; the observation is about the result.)

E: *You are right. How can I do it better next time?*

N: *When are we going to begin working as a team?* (A rhetorical question.)

E: *I am worried about our little progress in terms of teamwork.*

N: (looking at a wrist watch and showing tension in the mouth) *Alright, we can talk now if you want.* (There is semiotic disagreement between the words and the gestures.)

E: *I do want to talk to you about this, and I am also waiting for an important call. Can we talk later this afternoon?*

N: (to no one in particular) *Nobody cooperates in this house.* (Expecting to see who is going to take the abstract comment personally.)

E: *I want you kids to cooperate in some of the house chores.*

INTERNAL EMPOWERMENT SUMMARY:

	NOT EMPOWERED	INTERNAL EMPOWERMENT
CORRESPONDENCE	The authors or the people responsible for the thoughts, feelings or behaviors presented are not identified.	Attribute the thoughts, feelings and actions presented to a specific source.
CAPACITY	There is an absence or discounting of one or more perceptual and behavioral options, either real or potential.	Recognize the existence and the value of other possible perceptual and behavioral options, either potential or real.
CLARITY	One or more words have more than one possible meaning or interpretation.	Use words with an explained, agreed upon or co-created significance.
COHERENCE	There is disagreement between the semiotic channels or an inconsistency between the parts of the sentence, or between the sentence and the context.	Ensure the semiotic agreement, and the syntactic and contextual consistency.

INTERNAL EMPOWERMENT EXERCISES:

Re-state the following sentences, both verbally and in writing, in such a way that they are empowered. A sentence may have more than one word or part that needs empowering and it may be necessary to add (invent) some other data for the sentence to be meaningful in its empowered form.

EXAMPLE: The noise in here does not let me work.

E: I lose my concentration when there is so much noise.

1. I have an horrible depression.
2. I am a solitary person.
3. My nerves do not let me concentrate.
4. His behavior made me angry.
5. Classes are going well.
6. It is impossible to please my boyfriend.
7. How can you say that?
8. Don't you think it would be better to go tomorrow?
9. Let me think about it and then I will tell you.
10. I have to be more careful.
11. I have an aggressive tendency.
12. I would like to have more friends.
13. You are very impolite.
14. Who can endure being with these children?
15. We are progressing as well as can be expected.
16. Anyone would feel sad in this situation.

17. If I tell them the truth, they are going to feel bad.
18. If you could only tell me how to study better.
19. Why am I so shy?
20. I would never be able to finish a post-graduate program.
21. Suddenly the problem was solved.
22. My mother-in-law makes me feel terrible every time I go there.
23. I was late because there was too much traffic.
24. Everybody agrees with me.
25. He manipulates people with his stories.
26. My father will respect me when I graduate.
27. He is hysterical.
28. Such is life.
29. He makes me feel bad when I get home late.
30. Do you have a dollar?
31. Time just flew.
32. I have a certain sensation every time he criticizes me.
33. I will try to improve my study habits.
34. Dependency bores me.
35. The plate broke.
36. It is obvious that he wants the position.
37. You always criticize me.
38. I want to go but it is too late.
39. We Latins are like that.
40. I will do anything he says.
41. Time will tell.
42. I am terribly strict.
43. Perhaps you are right, but who knows?
44. I got the shakes.
45. We should be more careful.
46. You should not speak with your mouth full.
47. You are already mad at me.

II- DIALOGIC EMPOWERMENT

Nobody can empower anybody else, all you can do is to facilitate that the other person empowers him or herself. To do that we can ask to general types of questions that neurolinguistically facilitate this empowerment, and hence, our dialogue:

Tracking: Ask for the missing information or the meaning of what the other person said, using interrogation words such as “What”, “How”, “When”, “Where”, “Who”, etc.

Paraphrasing: Repeat in your own words, in a more empowered way, what you understood to be the meaning of what was said and then ask for confirmation: “Do you mean that....., is that right?”. Paraphrasing has the additional advantage of facilitating that the other person feels listened to and taken seriously.

CORRESPONDENCE: There is a correct attribution of authorship and/or responsibility for each thought, feeling and action that has been mentioned. Without it, the protagonists do not assume their due responsibility, and the individuals or the collective groups stop developing their power optimally.

Not empowered: *July's goal was accomplished.*

Dialogic Empowerment—Tracking: *Who accomplished the goal?*

Dialogic Empowerment—Paraphrasing: *Do you mean the Region Five salesmen met the goal?*

N: *Maria makes me feel guilty when I am late..*

DE-T: *Specifically, what does Maria do that you react to with guilty feelings?*

DE-P: *Do you mean that you feel guilty when Maria complains about your being late, is it right?*

N: *Juan got me drink!*

DE-T: *How much did you drink when you went out with Juan?*

DE-P: *You mean you drank too much when you went out with Juan?*

N: *The interview went well.*

DE-T: *What results did you get?*

DE-P: *You mean you were well prepared and were able to answer all the questions?*

N: *I am bored because nobody asks me to go out.*

DE-T: *What other alternatives do you have for activities without waiting to be asked?*

DE-P: *You mean you can only go out and not be bored if someone asks you to go out?*

N: *My criticism will make him feel bad.*

DE-T: *What are you going to tell him that you think he will react badly to?*

DE-P: *You mean you are afraid he will feel bad if you correct some mistakes he made in the report?*

N: *They flunked me in the test.*

DE-T: *In which topics were you not well enough prepared?*

DE-P: *You mean you did not prepare well enough for the exam?*

N: *I did not finish it due to a lack of time.*

DE-T: *How did you organize the time available?*

DE-P: *You mean you did not organize the time available adequately?*

N: *He makes me so happy!*

DE-T: *How does he act that you feel happy about?*

DE-P: *You mean you are happy with the way he acts when you are together, is that right?*

CAPACITY: There is a tacit or explicit mention of the most important perceptual and behavioral options—either potential or real. Any linguistic limitation of real options or capabilities of the individual or the group hinders the effectiveness of the system.

N: *I have to meet John at 3:00.*

DE-T: *What commitment did you make with him?*

DE-P: *You mean you made a commitment with John meet him at that time?*

N: *I cannot talk to you now.*

DE-T: *What is hindering you from doing so?*

DE-P: *You mean you are busy at this moment? Can we talk loater this afternoon?*

N: *Latins are always late.*

DE-T: *How does being Latin hinders you from being on tim?*

DE-P: *Do you think it is mandatory to belate just for being a Latin, is that it?*

N: *We have to call before we leave.*

DE-T: *What would happen if you did not call?*

DE-P: *You mean that you consider it polite to call first?*

N: *Do you want to go tomorrow or on Friday?*

DE-T: *What other alternatives are there?*

DE-P: *You mean you'd rather go one of these two days?*

N: *I know what he wants.*

DE-T: *How do you know what he wants?*

DE-P: *Then, do you think he wants togo out with you?*

N: *There was no way to finish the work.*

DE-T: *What hindered you from finishing it?*

DE-P: *You mean you did not know how to optimize the processes?*

N: *I have to stay with my little sister.*

DE-T: *If you didn't, what would happen?*

DE-P: *Then, you made the commitment to staying with your little sister this afternoon?*

N: *It is impossible to talk to the manager.*

DE-T: *Specifically, what have you done to talk to him?*

DE-P: *You mean you have exhausted all the communication channels with him?*

N: *I know what he is going to say.*

DE-T: *How are youso certain of what he is going to say?*

DE-P: *You mean you suppose what his reaction will be, is that it?*

CLARITY: There is explanation, agreement or co-creation of the significance of what is being said. Each person “knows” what the words mean; the difficulty emerges when the knowledge is different.

N: *Can you give me that watchamacallit over there.*

DE-T: *What do you want me to give you?*

DE-P: *Do you want the screwdriver?*

N: *There is a lack of respect to the customers.*

DE-T: *Specifically, what does he do that you consider to be a lack of respect?*

DE-P: *You mean it is lack of respect not waiting on the customer immediately, is this right?*

N: *The decision was already made.*

DE-T: *Who made the decision?*

DE-P: *You mean the manager had already decided who to hire, is that right?*

N: *A bunch of people arrived.*

DE-T: *Specifically, how many people arrived?*

DE-P: *Then, many more people than expected arrived?*

N: *She's got a depression.*

DE-T: *Whatis she feeling depressed about?*

DE-P: *You mean she gets depressed when her children do not call her, is this so?*

N: *Trusting is difficult.*

DE-T: *For whom?*

DE-P: *You mean it is difficult for you to trust the sales supervisor, is that it?*

N: *I will be in touch.*

DE-T: *When do you want us to talk?*

DE-P: *Then, will you call me next week?*

N: *I have tried to find out in the company.*

DE-T: *Specifically, what have you done to find that out?*

DE-P: *You mean you asked in Human Resources?*

N: *He has been a failure.*

DE-T: *What did he fail in?*

DE-P: *You mean he failed his selection test?*

N: *Everybody knows.*

DE-T: *Specifically, who knows it?*

DE-P: *You mean all the office staff know about it?*

COHERENCE: There is semiotic agreement (between the verbal and the non-verbal channels), a syntactic consistency (between the parts of the sentence), and contextual consistency (within which the sentence is pronounced).

N: *I want to sell more but the competition is tough.*

DE-T: *How is the competition hindering you from selling more?*

DE-P: *You mean there are not enough potential customers for both suppliers?*

N: *Don't you think it would be better to do this tomorrow?*

DE-T: *What do you think?*

DE-P: *You mean you think tomorrow would be better, is that right?*

Question: *What do you want to do tomorrow?*

N: *What I don't want to do is to stay home.*

DE-T: *And what is it that you do want to do?*

N: *He is as lazy as his father.*

DE-T: *Specifically, what do he and his father do that you consider lazy?*

DE-P: *I assume, then, that you think his father is lazy?*

N: (to the employee that arrives half an hour late in the morning) *Good afternoon, Miss!*

DE-T: *With this, do you mean you are upset with me being late?*

N: *I know I made a mistake with the date but the people in Production did not help me.*

DE-T: *Specifically, what do you want them to do in Production to support you in planning the delivery dates better?*

DE-P: *You mean you would not make mistakes if Production was more efficient?*

Stimulus: *You assembled the piece wrongly.*

N: *I tried to do it right.*

DE-T: *Then, with these good intentions, how can you do it better next time?*

N: *When will we ever begin working as a team?*

DE-T: *Specifically, how do you want us to work?*

DE-P: *You mean you are not satisfied with our work, is that it?*

N: (looking at the wrist watch and showing tension in the mouth) *We can talk now if you want.*

DE-P: *You mean you are willing to talk now although you would prefer another time, is that right?*

N: (to anyone in particular) *Nobody cooperates in this house.*

DE-T: *Specifically, how do you want us to collaborate?*

DE-P: *You mean you want us to collaborate more with you in the household chores?*

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CORRESPONDENCE	The authors or the people responsible for the thoughts, feelings or behaviors presented are not identified.	Track or paraphrase the thoughts, feelings and actions presented to agree upon the corresponding responsible source.
CAPACITY	There is an absence or discounting of one or more perceptual and behavioral options, either real or potential.	Track or paraphrase the existence and the value of other perceptual and behavioral options, either potential or real.
CLARITY	One or more words have more than one possible meaning or interpretation.	Track or paraphrase abstract words to create an explained, agreed upon or co-created semantic meaning.
COHERENCE	There is disagreement between the semiotic channels or an inconsistency between the parts of the sentence, or between the sentence and the context.	Track or paraphrase to assure semiotic agreement, and the syntactic and contextual consistency.

DIALOGICAL EMPOWERMENT EXERCISES:

Formulate tracking and paraphrasing responses to the following sentences, both verbally and in writing, in such a way that the person will tend to empower her or himself. A sentence may have more than one word or part that needs empowering and it may be necessary to add (invent) some other data for the sentence to be meaningful in its empowered form.

EXAMPLE: The noise in here does not let me work.

DE: You mean that you lose your concentration when there is so much noise.

1. I have an horrible depression.
2. I am a solitary person.
3. My nerves do not let me concentrate.
4. His behavior made me angry.
5. Classes are going well.
6. It is impossible to please my boyfriend.
7. How can you say that?
8. Don't you think it would be better to go tomorrow?
9. Let me think about it and then I will tell you.
10. I have to be more careful.
11. I have an aggressive tendency.
12. I would like to have more friends.
13. You are very impolite.

14. Who can endure being with these children?
15. We are progressing as well as can be expected.
16. Anyone would feel sad in this situation.
17. If I tell them the truth, they are going to feel bad.
18. If you could only tell me how to study better.
19. Why am I so shy?
20. I would never be able to finish a post-graduate program.
21. Suddenly the problem was solved.
22. My mother-in-law makes me feel terrible every time I go there.
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25. He manipulates people with his stories.
26. My father will respect me when I graduate.
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