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Abstract

Motivational profiling is commonly done in both marketing and forensic contexts. In an unabashed quest for creativity, many marketer s use projective psychological techniques to search for inspiration that leads to ad concepts that will, ultimately, sell more products. Forensic professionals also seek predictive information about motivation in search of facts that will effectively lead to the capture and handling of criminals by using the recent advances found in linguistic technology. Projective profiling techniques produce very soft, opinionated data that are open to interpretation and which has only random relevance to predicting customer behavior. In contrast, linguistic profiling techniques produce hard data that are reliable, valid and very powerful in predicting behavior. The differences in process and results between the creative versus linguistic profiling are compared. Linguistic profiling is clearly the superior approach if prediction of behavior is at issue.

Keywords

Motivational Profiling, Forensics, Linguistics, Qualitative Market Research, Creative Techniques, Projective Techniques

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Motivational profiling is commonly done in both marketing and forensic contexts. In an unabashed quest for creativity, many marketers use projective psychological techniques to search for inspiration that leads to ad concepts that will, ultimately, sell more products. Forensic professionals also seek predictive information about motivation in search of facts that will effectively lead to the capture and handling of criminals by using the recent advances found in linguistic technology. Projective profiling techniques produce very soft, opinionated data that are open to interpretation and which has only random relevance to predicting customer behavior. In contrast, linguistic profiling techniques produce hard data that are reliable, valid and very powerful in predicting behavior. The differences in process and results between the creative versus linguistic profiling are compared. Linguistic profiling is clearly the superior approach if prediction of behavior is at issue.

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Motivation

The playwright Neil Simon summed up a major theme in qualitative research in reference to his stories: "It's about *wanting*; if it's not about *wanting*, it's not about people." In law enforcement circles, *wanting*, a.k.a., *motivation*, is central to crime fighting. In marketing, motivation is also central. The difference: in law enforcement, motivational profiling is deadly serious because lives are at stake while in marketing, motivational profiling may be merely semi-serious where only money is at stake (… sometimes *lots* of money).

Law enforcement motivational profiles, driven by linguistic models, are based on evidence. Marketing profiles, at least those generated by projective techniques, are based on unreliable impressions formed without predictive validity: evidence is rarely produced. Three decades of linguistic technology provide the means to get the needed hard facts about motivation. Law enforcement has embraced this technology because the evidence works in profiling motives in high stakes situations. Marketers who use projective techniques get almost no facts and are willing to settle for imagination, vague impressions and supposition that has little or no bearing on the facts of motivation. The difference is behavioral engineering versus creative art.

Enter Linguistics

Let's get our premises clear. We all learn in Psychology 101 that people are *always* motivated. People are *always* thinking and deciding about what they want. Scores of motivated decisions begin with our response to the morning alarm clock and continue from moment to moment throughout the day. In grammar school English we learned another relevant fact: "A sentence is a group of words expressing a complete thought." People often say, "Of course! Of course! We *know* that." Maybe we don't know as much as we would like to think. Few of us wanted to learn all the grammar in the textbooks. Perhaps that explains why research practitioners seldom systematically connect the simple idea that sentences express thoughts to their research designs.

As linguist Benjamin Whorf (1956) noted: "The limits of my language are the limits of my world." In motivational matters, we are largely motivated by what we are capable of thinking. David McClelland, noted pioneering Harvard psychologist, assessed motives by language content analysis (McClelland, 1961). His early work looked for thematic motivational differences among verbiage expressed by cultures, but he did not plumb the latent depths of linguistic architecture. Soon, linguists added the missing ingredient: They mapped the architecture of language, for example, Chomsky's (1968) "transformational grammar." Then Bandler and Grinder (1975; Grinder & Bandler, 1976) connected the architectural *meta-language of* language with behavioral assessment, prediction, intervention and change. Behavioral engineering of the linguistic kind was born and rapidly developed.

Hence, in diagnosing and prescribing predictive changes to behavior, informed motivational researchers can now encounter a linguistically framed research vocabulary. That vocabulary defines effective tools for motivational profiling. Linguistic profiling technology has evolved since the sixties to a fine edge. However, its applications have been embraced by some and ignored by others. One reason for that is the various brand names used for overlapping aspects of the field, for example, linguistics, general semantics, behavioral linguistics, psycho-linguistics and neuro-linguistics. This scattered literature requires a wide-ranging search to gather the many components into tightly disciplined research tools.

In practice, law enforcement has embraced linguistic technology while much of the qualitative marketing research community has continued to use the antiquated approach of projective techniques. If motivated decision-making is a game, then the forensics of cause-effect linguistic *evidence* represents a disciplined scorecard that documents how motivation works and can be changed. In contrast, the free-form creativity of projectives is the antithesis of discipline offering instead a type of imaginative flight-of-fancy that indulges the researcher's imagination at the cost of hard facts. These two contrasting areas of application offer insight into the value of upgrading ones professional tool kit to utilize improved linguistic technology.

Linguistic Evidence and Complex Scorecards

The practice of linguistics typically profiles motivation by the most generic of formulae to get the facts needed for action: ask well-engineered questions and get

motivation-related answers that are parsed according to definitive linguistic rules that, in turn, point to specific interventions that will produce the desired effects. Cause-and-effect is in play throughout the linguistic analysis process. Neither the a-causal premises of correlation nor the disconnects of subjective free-association enter the picture.

Evidence created by linguistically bounded motivational analysis is quite complex, but very solid phenomena to work with. Selected examples of the motivational components that allow documentation are worth mentioning to illustrate the vocabulary: representational systems, accessing cues, four-tuples, frames, pacing, predicate systems, presuppositions, linguistic modeling, isomorphic analogs, Meta Model, context, Milton Model, syntax, transderivational search, superordinates, sensory specifics, nominalizations, lack of referential index, semantic well-formedness conditions, unconscious motivational patterns, complex equivalence, context and content reframing, disassociation, generalizations, and modal operators.

These are just a few of the components of the motivational mechanisms that reveal clear evidence of motives and how they work (Bandler & Grinder, 1975; Dilts, Bandler, DeLozier, & Grinder, 1980; Yeager, 1985). The many elements in linguistics offer research practitioners a powerful toolkit for behavioral engineering.

Creativity - True North on the Marketing Compass

In projectives, the process of profiling customer motives is more diffuse than the tightly disciplined linguistic law enforcement methods. That is, if one enters a focus group with a preconceived idea, it is likely to be confirmed. Without proper fact finding tools to validate the ideas (or not) one will be lead astray by those preconceptions. These projective tools produce figments of the researchers imagination, not motivational facts. Projectives manifest themselves in many forms such as Rorschach inkblot tests, Jungian word association, semantic differential (Osgood, Succi, & Tannenbaum, 1957), imaginative techniques (e.g., How is this drug similar to a city? Or What animal is like this drug?), personification (pretending to be a box of cornflakes), interpreting finger paintings, constructing a toy or a device, reading tea leaves, and similar such exercises in imagination. Even the focus group itself is a projective device when it is used to confirm the presuppositions of those who conduct the group.

Tools of the projective type are commonly used in one-on-one interviews and the ubiquitous focus group engaged by market researchers. The drawback of using such exercises is that, regardless of beliefs to the contrary, projectives offer little or nothing to define a motive nor do they suggest hard linkage to whatever might be actionable in using the findings of a projective approach. There is no cause-effect mechanism to connect the dots.

March (1994) notes the pervasive influence of *superstitious learning*.

> The association between actions and outcomes is misunderstood, but learning takes place nevertheless. Rules are adopted and beliefs and actions are shaped by interpretations of experience. There is little chance of self-correction because the learning and interpretations are internally consistent. They are wrong, but they are wrong in ways in ways that do not easily reveal themselves…. Beliefs in the effectiveness of various strategies, products, technologies, or rules are often learned in conditions

> that make it hard to determine causal relations. … - much of what is learned is likely to be based on associations between actions and outcomes that are more fortuitous than causal. (p. 90)

In contrast, linguistic coding of behavioral phenomena in research is now as stable as the eight parts of speech, that is, tomorrow there won't be nine or seven parts of speech; just eight. Parsing sentences into their components parts of speech is a reliable and valid exercise devoid of confusion. In essence, this means that the scorecard for the game of motivation research has become stabilized and objective, reliable and valid. Linguistics offers behavioral researchers a hard-science, cause-effect mechanism for diagnosing and predicting and prescribing interventions that will work with certainty. (In this discussion, we deal only with motivation, not *means* and *opportunity* which are also key parts of the behavioral equation).

Why Profiling?

The original need for forensic profiling was recognized by legendary FBI profiler John O. Douglas (1999) when he realized the different motives behind the same crime of burglary:

> Similar burglaries, but vastly different perpetrators. One did it because it seemed easy and he didn't think much about it. The other did it because he felt that no one else mattered. (p. 25)
>
> …it occurred to me that the only way to figure out what had happened at a crime scene was to understand what had gone on inside the head of the principal actor in that drama; the offender. And the only way to find that out, so we could apply the knowledge to other crimes was to ask him. Amazingly, with all the research that had been done in criminology, no one had attempted that before in any but the most casual and haphazard way. (p. 25)

This law enforcement point of view echoes the same concerns of marketers of two or three decades ago. Even though marketers attempted to define motivation decades earlier than Douglas, they settled for projective tools that seemed to trigger and enhance the creative thoughts of their ad-agency copywriters and graphic artists. A literal understanding of motives was ignored in favor of supposedly creative methods. Projectives have a large and dedicated following of practitioners in consulting practices and on the staffs of ad agencies. Astrology and numerology enjoy a similar following although neither can claim the status of technology.

Why do ineffective creative and projective techniques enchant so many people? Denial from closed and superstitious minds is certainly at work. Certainly, contradictory evidence is rejected when one believes strongly in a given tool. Perhaps the major reason is because of a belief strongly held by the advertising industry. That is, many ad agency CEO's have told the author that advertising is a commodity industry. To distinguish any given agency from another requires considerable skill with self-promotion. Creativity is often offered as the main differentiator among ad agency competitors in acquiring client companies.

Misplaced Creativity

As it was put to the author by the CEO of a New York agency, Sutton Communications: "Any ad agency is as good as any other ad agency. Most of the work is about the mechanics of production. The only differentiator among agencies is the quality of the creative people on staff." (G. DeSimone, personal communication, May 15, 1989). In that context, many creative ads come to mind: The Budweiser Frogs, the original "Zen" ads for the introduction of the Infinity luxury car or the award winning ads of Stan Freeberg for prunes. They were exceptionally creative ads, but they did not sell the product because they were not connecting to the motives of the target audience. Customers did not feel romanced by irrelevant ads. Yet, the industry tends to blindly believe in such creativity even when those beliefs are self-defeating and contrary to its interests.

The perspective offered by Douglas Rushkoff (1999), in reviewing the fall of the Wells BDDP agency, provides a representative case in point. Rushkoff, a consultant to the industry offers an insiders point of view.

> The forces leading to the collapse of Wells BDDP are the same ones threatening the rest of the advertising industry. … The vanguard young creatives … refuse to develop campaigns that don't break new conceptual or artistic ground. They don't want to create advertising merely to sell things; they want to have fun. (p.169)

Creativity via projective techniques tends to fail in this way: Stepping up to bat in major league baseball requires a baseball bat. While it may be quite creative to use a hockey stick instead of the bat, it will not be effective. Creativity out of context of the real motives at hand is a fatal mistake for many ad campaigns. Any potential for creativity in law enforcement is reserved for innovative ways to enhance effective engineering of the fact-gathering processes that elicits the literal motivation at issue in any given investigation.

It is given wisdom in advertising that the creative imagination of copy writers and illustrators and media experts will overcome any absence of real understanding of customer motivation. As a result, "creative" techniques are used much like a secret ingredient or mystique-filled approach that client-companies are ill-equipped to argue against. In contrast, linguistic profiling is more akin to a highly disciplined behavioral engineering process and is neither romantic nor creative - except in its superior ability to deliver results.

Unbridled marketing creativity eliminates the possibility of utilizing effective technology. If a suggestive idea found in research might vaguely suggest a motive that might lead to creativity, then agencies leap on the idea. It does not matter how focused, or not, the creative idea might be in terms of actual motives - as long as the client-company eventually approves the proposed advertising campaign.

Again, Rushkoff offers a pointed illustration of how a concept created in the context of a creative team will have a difficult time connecting to the motives of the target audience with out a clear definition of their motivation. Instead, a concept is created out of thin air and then research via creative projective methods is used to confirm the presupposition. This method gets the creative cart before the motivational

horse of the customers mind set. It was a fatal mistake for the Wells BDDP agency; it is a mistake made by many campaigns.

> Atkin's [a key player in the story] challenge was to help the Amstel brand claim the concept of open-mindedness - the way Nike had claimed the individual achievement or Levi's had taken authenticity - without ever defining precisely what open-mindedness is. (1999, p. 166)

In sum, rather than find out with effective methods if the abstract concept of "open-mindedness" was even on the customer's radar, it was selected and then had to be proven by whatever tools and mental gymnastics were required. Any associations the consumer might have had to the word were manufactured artificially and retrospectively rather than to have been elicited from the actual mind of the targeted audience in the first place. This is the flaw of the projective mind set. With the linguistic approach, one elicits what is actually going on in the mind of the target audience. There is no guesswork and no preconceived "concepts" are created in an executive boardroom without evidence. The linguistic approach requires that the evidence come from the horse's mouth without preconception.

Another fact has let the advertising industry off relatively easily, i.e., the difficulty of measuring the impact of advertising. For instance, it is common to measure ad *recognition* (who remembers the ad) because agencies are lacking effective tools for measuring ad impact on persuasive behavior change. Keep in mind; *remembering* is not the same as a change in purchasing behavior. As noted in Clay (2002), "Unfortunately, there's little evidence that simply recalling an ad changes behavior." Depth psychology, an eager attempt at creatively defining motivation, was the fashionable rage in the 1950's. But it's Freudian luster wore off, however, when its results proved too ineffective even for creative types. Creative techniques have yet to evolve any significant technological developments in profiling since then. "It's not enough for an ad to be creative. It has to change minds." Clay (2002). Without a clear profile of the mechanisms of the change in question, one is left with trial and error approaches.

Bridging the gap between projective "conceptual" exercises and actual motivation is a pure leap of faith with projectives because of one simple fact: projectives are not about motivation. Projectives are about imagination. Projectives produce no hard evidence. Projectives offer absolutely no information about the motivational mechanisms of action that drive the motive or that are capable of changing the motive in question. In short, projectives beat around the bush and miss the bird, while linguistics, especially of the forensic variety, go for the jugular by providing outcomes that work.

Forensic Profiling's Purpose

But, what is the applied focus of profiling? Here is the answer offered by John O. Douglas, (1999) now retired from the FBI.

> Whether or not you come right out and say it, the study of applied criminal psychology all gets down to that key question: why do criminals commit the crimes they do the way they do? (p. 26)

The current need in market research is a twin of those quotations. Just change the nouns. That is: "Whether or not you come right out and say it, the study of applied customer psychology all gets down to that key question: why do customers commit the

choices they do, the way they do?" The bottom line question: What are the causes and what are the effects - and does the profile reveal these facts of the decision-making in an effective manner?

> … the key details - the ones that made the difference (in understanding motive) to us - were those we had to get right from the subject himself. (p. 27)
>
> At the beginning, all I was trying to do was …. to ask them the questions I hoped would help us learn more about real applied criminal psychology, not in an academic sense but in a way that would help in the field, in finding real offenders and solving real cases. (p. 27)

Linguistic tools born in the sixties and seventies were well timed to help the cause of finding the mechanisms of motivation. As an inherent behavioral modeling mechanism, linguistics became an essential base line for accurate, objective measurement of motivation. The need has been clear: explain motivation for application in the field. Criminal profiling had its agenda and marketing had its agenda (not to mention, psychotherapy also had its agenda). Each field angled the tools to suit its particular context and agenda. In fact, linguistics is suited to serve as a primary tool of choice for a great deal more research were it not for lingering, antique beliefs about what tools best serve one's purpose in defining motivation.

Linguistics has a wide following in psychotherapy as well as in law enforcement. Marketers have been slower to accept linguistics because of a misguided belief in the power of unbridled creativity. While the linguistic engineering of each applied field is a bit different, a basic principle applies. *If* you ask effectively, and *if* you have the right linguistic tools, *then* people will tell you everything you need to know about motivation - in detail - *and* you will have sure and certain data to intervene as suits your purpose. Though the author uses these profiling tools for many contexts beyond those mentioned here, market researchers have proven to be the laggards.

Marketers who fool around with figments of their imaginations are, comparatively, playing cruel jokes on their clients. Except on television's "X"-Files, can you imagine an FBI agent asking for someone to engage in a projective technique such as: "Well, sir, how is your crime like a tree?" Such an agent would be exiled to the Aleutian Islands on the first available airplane. Projectives are not used in forensic circles to profile motives nor are they used in informed marketing or therapeutic circles. The main reason: they don't work when it comes to profiling motivation. If a felon were to imagine him or herself to be a tree and if it led to the arrest of other felons, the FBI would be the first organization to use the technique. But it doesn't work and the FBI doesn't use it. Case closed.

The Problem of Relative Coding

There is an essential problem in qualitative research that must be overcome. Successful results depend on how the problem is solved. Let's take a solid example of the qualitative research literature, Richard E. Boyatzis' work, *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development* (Boyatzis, 1998), is an excellent example of a well written book on how to do qualitative research. Everything in the book is fairly representative of established ways of doing qualitative research. The main

missing ingredient however is the absence of a fixed point of reference for the coding of the findings, i.e., the scorecard about the data one seek and find. This situation is characteristic of most any other book on the topic. Ordinary, perhaps, "customary" coding procedures, are *relative* to the coder. That is, coders are free to make up any subjective scheme at all based on any reasonable set of premises or precedents.

Boyatzis notes the problem with the relativity of coding schemes:

> Often what one sees through thematic analysis does not appear to others, even if they are observing the same information, events, or situations. To others, if they agree with the insight, the insight appears almost magical. If they are empowered by the insight, it appears visionary. If they disagree with the insight, it appears delusionary. (p. 1)

Users of projective techniques are living proof of this observation by Boyatzis. Imagine the chaos if English language experts disagreed about which word in a sentence was a verb and which was a noun. This means that with relativistic coding, perception is, like beauty, in the eye of the beholder. In a word, information achieved from projective techniques is *relative* regardless of how much consensus is achieved among coders in a given context. In contrast, the architecture of linguistic tools provides a much needed, rock solid, universal framework for developing effective research designs and universal coding that produce real evidence (instead of technique-generated artifacts). Linguistic coding results in predictable and relevant interventions and outcomes. Conventionally, according to Boyatzis, any researcher's coding system is left to the discretion of the individual researcher without the comprehensive advantages of linguistic modeling. If the field of chemistry still operated on such loose terms, we'd be mixing the alchemy of batwings and toadstools to create gold out of lead.

Linguistic tools are based on a complex, yet fixed, set of components and architecture, i.e., the structure and modeling properties of language itself. The structure, the architecture, of language will be universal to all native speakers of any given language. Projective techniques such as personification, imagination techniques, free-association, and such do not have an implicit or explicit connection to the linguistic architecture of motives, thought and decisions, thus the usual coding is conventional at best or subjective and arbitrary at worst. Reliance on the creative equivalent of emotional finger painting does not help the cause. This is true regardless of whatever precedent, role model or theory the researcher's relativistic coding scheme is patterned upon.

Projective techniques, by definition are out of context with the spontaneous linguistically driven motivational rationales of day-to-day motivated problem solving and decision-making. Projectively derived profiles are missing the common denominators of *motive* and the motive's *linguistic expressions*. That is, projectives are missing the architecture of sentences and related language phenomena that offer definitive data for the motivational questions at hand. While there may be a good deal of attention paid to the content of what subjects *say* about their projective experience, properly analyzing the verbal *content* of sentences is only part of the task; the architecture, the structure, of the sentences must also be analyzed if one hopes to obtain the entire story of the motives at hand. Again Boyatzis notes

> Often, researchers using quantitative and qualitative methodologies battle on the level of philosophical abstractions merely because they are having difficulty communicating with each other. People will vigorously argue about their differing epistemologies - differing ways of knowing - and will engage in defensive derogation of other's methods. (p. 5)

Linguist, S. I. Hayakawa (1990) illustrates this problem of conceptual abstractions with his famous “Bessie the Cow” example. One starts in a farmyard at the sensory level of observation where one can poke an animal in the ribs and gather real data. When the farmer labels the observations as “Bessie” an abstract label has been attached to the observations. One then can rise further up the ladder of abstractions to ‘cow’, to ‘livestock’, to ‘farm asset’, to ‘asset’, to ‘wealth’. However, one cannot start with any of these abstractions on the ladder (e.g., ‘wealth’) and, in reverse, deduce that one is talking about a cow. Abstract concepts quickly and problematically depart from the actual observed phenomena – or never create real data in the first place.

This problem is nicely solved with the inherently universal characteristics of linguistic coding, for example, intrinsic relevance, inherent reliability and validity, objectively observed and codable evidence and virtually flawless inter-rater reliability (Bandler & Grinder 1975; Grinder and Bandler, 1976).

The Interview and Focus Groups

Forensic psychology has developed the motivational profile to a fine edge (Douglas, 1999). Interviewing in forensic circumstances calls for cause-effect linkage between the components of the work. Evidence is a crucial component. Questions and answers must be related to producing usable evidence for the task at hand. There are at least two versions of a forensic interview (Kinnee, 1994).

Interview: In the strictest sense of the word, an interview is conducted when a person who is not a suspect is questioned to determine whether the person possesses information that is of value to the investigator's case.

> *Interrogation*: The definition of interrogation is essentially the same as t hat of interview, except that the person being interviewed is a suspect in the case at hand. (pp. 341)

Assuming that profiling may have lead to the arrest of a subject, the main task of a forensic interview or an interrogation is to ask questions in such a way as to persuade a suspect to confess. Failing that, the answers should be useful in preparing a court case that will persuade a jury. Marketers also want the equivalent of a confession, i.e., a customer who says "Yes" to a product or service. In either case, in marketing and in forensics, knowledge of the mechanisms of motivation and persuasion are at the heart of successful interventions. Law enforcement has an effective track record of interviewing. Marketing's success is more equivocal. Marketing uses the interview but often with ineffective techniques.

It is worth noting that law enforcement does not use group interviews to define motivation because groups cloud the process. Social desirability and other dynamics get in the way of concise fact finding. In practice, the real motive of consumers becomes obscured by unfocused focus groups.

Mechanism of Action

In doing marketing research work with Fortune 100 pharmaceutical companies, one quickly becomes aware of the scientific notion of "mechanism of action" for any given drug. That is, the "mechanism of action" accounts for the causes-and-effects of the compound in question upon the human body. The mechanism of change accounts for the transition from diseased state to cured state. Without an equivalent mechanism in behavioral research, we would be on par with alchemy and other superstitious forms of thinking. Effective persuasion requires a mechanism to precisely match the motives of a target audience.

Projective techniques and most conventional coding for behavioral research often systematically codifies free-associations, opinions, and guesses *about the artifacts* of the techniques used, but not the motives, *per se*. The content produced by the technique is often distorted by the marketing team to fit its presuppositions about the phenomenon under study. On the other hand, the actual mechanism of action is clearly available in linguistics as it is in chemistry. The linguistic mechanisms driving motivation permit documentation of actual motivation, not artifacts of flawed elicitation or flawed coding techniques. Linguistics provides the missing mechanism of action in coding behavior useful to the marketing community.

Practitioners have been discussing this topic for some time. In fact, this solves a great many concerns about the ubiquitous criterion problem; that is, are researchers measuring what they think they are measuring (Yeager & Sommer, 1980). Being certain of one's criteria makes possible selection of appropriate interventions based on knowledge instead of guesswork. Motivation, incentives, executive performance change and language issues are daily elements of the corporate world and apply to management as well as to marketing. Effective solutions have wide ranging impact on the bottom line.

> While motivation is much discussed and responses such as salary incentive systems are much in evidence, motivation is seldom thoroughly understood. Trying one approach after another holds out the possibility of a lucky hit. It is well-documented that most attempts to motivate people amount to trial and error. (Yeager, 1990, p. 59)
>
> Once you know a person's language style, you can predict and manage his behavior and results. (Yeager, 1993, p. 3)

It seems safe to say that linguistic technology offers some handy state of the art tools in analyzing motivation.

Inter-rater Reliability

As noted above, the linguistic mechanism of action in behavior is crucial if one wants to understand motives and decision making that will lead to predictable results from one's chosen interventions. Language coding allows the consistent coding of behavior that, in turn, allows prediction of behavior for the context and purpose in question. The inter-rater reliability is virtually flawless. For example, any ten English teachers are not unlikely to mistakenly identify a noun as a preposition nor will they mistake a subject for a predicate. Similarly, a linguistically trained law enforcement or marketing profiler (or even a psychotherapeutic profiler) is equally unlikely to confuse,

e.g., a linguistic *frame* with a linguistic *distortion* even though both phenomena are routinely-used components in profiling motives.

The Market Research Point of View

Qualitative market research in business typically focuses on attempts to assess the motives of actual or potential customers. The overall goal is to sell more products by matching the persuasive appeal of ads to harmonize with the buyer's motives. Typically, samples of the customer populations are interviewed face to face, on the phone or in small groups (focus groups) in attempts to gather relevant information about which "promises" or "claims" will elicit a motivated customer response that amounts to "Yes! I want your product!"

Essentially, most qualitative market research (at least in messaging and ad-copy development) wants to know how to predict which of many potential messages will actually produce a behavior change from No to Yes. This goal is also true of many other applications such as product positioning studies, brand studies and even the trade-marking of enticing name brands for products. The information gathered is used to develop product positioning, pithy messages, ad copy, ad graphics, marketing and sales literature and the sales-scripts used by professional sales representatives. In short, if a marketer were to know what a customer wants, in complete and accurate detail, a sales and marketing campaign can be organized to appeal to those specific wants. The desired result: more products are sold than would otherwise be the case. Unfortunately, market researchers don't get the results they need because of because of the handicaps delivered by their inherently flawed projective techniques.

A Marketing Handicap - Unintended Consequences

The marketer wants to profile the motivation of the market segment at issue to learn what promises, claims, features or benefits will make them want to buy any given product. In spite of earnest efforts, this is frequently done badly on Madison Avenue.

Politics enters the equation when one lacks facts with which to present one's case accurately. So, imagine you are sitting behind a one-way mirror in the observation room looking into an adjacent focus group room. Several representative consumers sitting around a table on the other side of the mirror will be questioned about their opinions on a given product. Perhaps they will be asked to choose which of several accessory packages they prefer for a new mid-price automobile. In the observation room, you are joined by senior executives from the client company's staff.

Often, one or more of the client's senior staff members will make a well-intended statement such as: "No doubt, we will find that the consumers prefer the features in design-package "A" and none of the other optional designs." This person's conclusion has been reached before the elicitation of evidence from the consumers has even begun. The statement may be said in passing or in jest, but it can begin an avalanche of unintended consequences. For instance, junior executives jump to agree with the boss. In addition, the focus group moderator may tend to bias the questions to probe the executive's preconception.

As consumers respond to questions in the focus group, the observers connect the answers with their own subjective experience and preconceptions. In the manner of an Inquisitor from the Dark Ages intent on proving someone a witch, a conclusion has been reached and all subsequent data will be twisted to support and "prove" the senior executive's preconception. If this executive's attitude prevails - as it often does in real life - the new accessory package of this executive's preference will be brought to the market place. The mind of the consumer will have been effectively ignored, and the bottom line result will be the proverbial "dull thud" of a failed multi-million dollar marketing effort. This scenario occurs with surprising regularity due to the lack of proper tools to prevent it.

The aforementioned Wells BDDP situation is simply one obvious case. This distressing scenario can be completely avoided with the application of effective tools. When one has a solid set of fact-finding tools for profiling, it is quite simple to demonstrate the conclusiveness of those findings. In the presence of convincing facts, bias of this kind generally disappears.

There is, effectively, no real technology involved in this focus group example. This scenario happens every day among very sophisticated organizations. If you were an investor in this company, would you be pleased? Not likely. Your investment is being squandered. This scenario is a sophisticated and expensive waste of time. Decisions are not being made on hard facts driven by effective technology, but on flimsy, un-provable impressions with no evidence to prove the case at hand.

Forensic Differences

In contrast, imagine that you are a security agent questioning passengers about to board an airplane in a tense country on the verge of war. Perhaps your family members are among the passengers. You need to determine which, if any of the other passengers, might be a dangerous terrorist with intent to hijack the airplane. The stakes are very high. A disastrously wrong "guess" or opinion by a security specialist can quickly send him or her to a career gulag in Siberia. The situation calls for highly accurate judgments to identify the motives of the passengers - even when deception may be a major component of the responses elicited from the passengers interviewed.

Questions are asked that have certain implicit architecture to them that produces a definable type of response. For instance, take this fictitious illustration: "Sir, when you had to choose an airline for this flight, why did you choose Moonlight Airlines?" Such a question seems innocuous but, linguistically, it elicits (among many other things) whether the person is avoiding a perceived problem situation - or approaching a solution. This is an example of the classic "approach/avoid" distinction. See *The Structure of Magic* (Bandler & Grinder, 1975; Grinder & Bandler, 1976) for the linguistic mechanisms behind such a question.

Such simple-appearing *linguistically loaded* questions are cross-referenced to comb out discrepancies in answers. The result is a through knowledge of the motives in question. Also, observations of known body language expressions will be cross-referenced to search for deceptive responses. For instance, certain types of questions will elicit a glance from the interviewee to either the right or the left of his field of view. In the context of the specific question(s) being asked, the glance will further implicate or

exonerate the interviewee's motives (Bandler & Grinder, 1978). The general public first saw this body-language component of linguistic modeling in the movie, *The Negotiator*, that starred Samuel L. Jackson. This linguistically designed and systematic approach to behaviorally engineered questioning produces reliable and valid, predictable results. If you were a passenger on this airplane, would you be reasonably well protected? Yes.

A Commercial Example - Listerine versus Scope

Let's use a commercial example of how a simple language characteristic works (i.e., the approach-avoid distinction). A ready example presents itself. One can see on television the ways Listerine and Scope mouthwashes have reorganized their competing ad copy. Listerine used to preach to the motive of "avoiding bad breath." Scope used to preach to the motive of "getting fresh breath."

Each competing marketing team from the two companies eventually came to realize that by appealing to only the "avoid" motive or only the "approach" motive, each was losing market share to their opponent. These days, both teams are appealing to both approach and avoid motivational mind-sets in their ads. So both competitors now say: "You get fresh breath and avoid germs."

As mentioned in the airline scenario above, the interviewee's response of either "toward" or "away" is cross-referenced with other questions allowing deception to be detected, while in the marketing scenario, one projects into the answers what one wants to see. Seldom is only one linguistic characteristic at issue. There are literally dozens of these linguistic indicators such as "approach/avoid" that serve as components of a linguistic profile. Usually there are scores of relevant components to a motive with a few obvious elements that, like the tip of an iceberg, imply much more beneath the surface.

Law enforcement uses a very carefully planned system using tightly engineered questions that are known to elicit certain reactions from any given interviewee. In turn, the answers will reveal the reality of the interviewee's motives because linguistic technology has been demonstrated to reveal the motivational mechanisms of action.

Questioning Rationales

A linguistic interview guide in a typical marketing investigation will serve as the key to finding effective answers to motivational issues. Usually, the number of direct questions will number about thirty to fifty. Each question may require 2, 3, 4 or 5 additional probes. Of course, any given question may elicit more than was intended. The coder must be prepared to parse the information and identify it for the proper category. The design of an effective interview is a high quality piece of behavioral engineering based on linguistic characteristics that affect motives and decisions. Whether a given question's intent is transparent or not, typical questions will be asked about the individual's intent, preferences, desired features, supportive materials, expectations, previous experience and so on.

For example: "What do you want in an anti-depressant?" This type of question, for example, will elicit goals and preferences in product features. Or, alternatively phrased: "If you were to choose an antidepressant, why would you do so?" This second type of phrasing will elicit whether the individual is motivated toward a solution or away

from a complication. In either case, the researcher will know concretely the content of the response as well as its architecture and then will know how to construct those data into the design of an intervention. Question design is a significant engineering topic of its own and is not discussed here. In developing a research project, question design is focused on cause and effect so that any of the findings is easily tested and validated as part of the interviewing and coding process. The processes and procedures produce *proof*. There is no guesswork. There is no interpretation.

> For example: What are some of the main considerations that you had in choosing to prescribe (your favorite) antidepressant? What was the overall situation with respect to choosing an antidepressant?
> Probes:
> - What is important to you about (issue/concern)?
> - Why do you think that is important? (What is your theory about (issue/concern)?

Coding the answers to such questions requires extensive training. In a typical linguistic analysis for an advertising campaign, several effective alternatives emerge that directly impact behavior change. Once the crucial factors are identified, explicit processes are engaged to design the intervention that will impact the audience in the desired manner. The interventions are always tested and validated for effect before the larger marketing campaign is engaged. Following are two condensed and greatly simplified examples of crucial factors that can come into play.

A Case Example: Ophthalmic Sutures

Competitive pressure in the market place is another major drive behind the gradual acceptance of linguistic approaches. Enlightened marketing teams using linguistic results have documented major improvements in pinpointing the motives of the buyers.

For example, the author was engaged to assist a major corporation, with its marketing efforts, The product at issue was an improved type of ophthalmic suture used in surgical procedures such as cataract operations. The operating campaign was focused upon some genuine improvements in the features of their sutures. For instance, they tended to stay sharp longer than other brands and the thread was less likely to tangle due to packaging design.

Using a common "drum-roll-with-blaring-trumpets" rationale in advertising, the improvements were characterized as stupendous *breakthroughs* in design. While the features were, indeed, notable improvements, the notion of breakthrough status seemed incredulous to the surgeons. Their attitude toward the extremeness of the campaign claim was: "Give me a break! A suture is a piece of wire with thread on it. What is the big deal?" The campaign was misfiring badly.

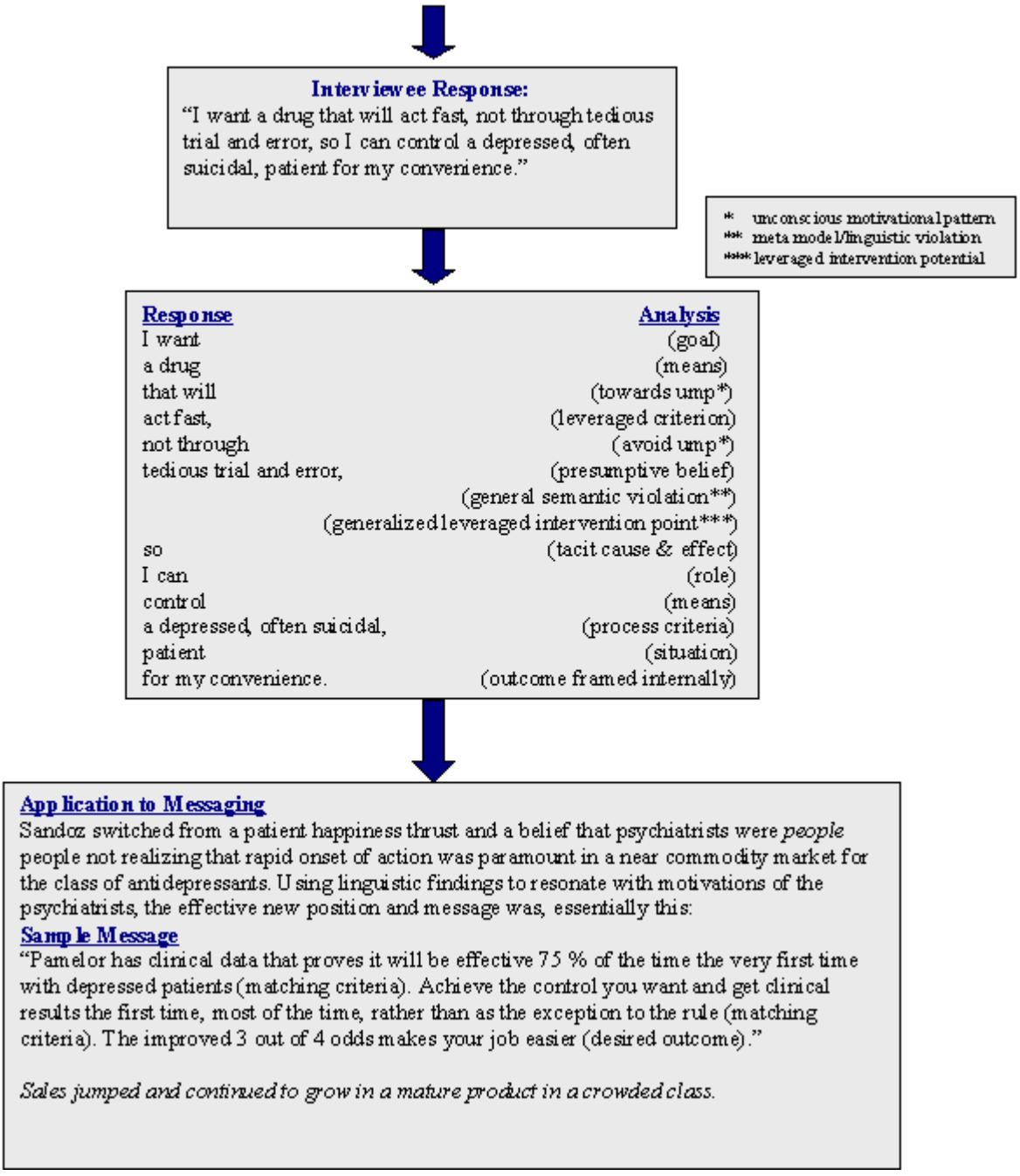
Linguistic tools were brought into play by interviewing a small sample from the audience of surgeons. The interviews revealed that the sharpness feature was of value in reducing tissue damage and the tangle free feature helped in creating a running series of stitches without complications. But the critical linguistic feature of their motivational issues was the linguistic frame in which the entire persuasive package was presented. The "change tense" was the main linguistic issue that was misfiring.

Boiled down to its essence, the failing campaign touted the product improvements as major differences. Everyone knows the *time* tenses - the familiar tenses of *past, present and future*. Less well known is the linguistic *change* tense that allows one to frame a phenomenon as either the *same* as, totally *different* from or *slightly different* from the status quo. When ad agencies intuitively use this language feature they often guess at how to apply it. They usually compromise on this topic by offering *new* and *improved* as an attraction, thus hitting on two out of three of the change tense possibilities. Just wander down supermarket aisles to observe "new and improved" on quite a few products. In the case of the sutures, the major linguistic component that matched the audience's motive was to abandon the claim of "difference" and present the claims within the more credible frame of "improved".

When the campaign was aligned to the proper linguistic details and the change tense was reframed as *improved* versus *different*. This change matched the surgeons' beliefs so well that the marketing team attained a documented 75% and 330% increase in sales in two product lines within ninety days. (J. McLean, personal communication, June 8, 1986). That was a whopping and unprecedented gain for the company. This was made possible by the accuracy and power of the linguistic tools employed on the project to find and design a response to the mindset of the surgeons. This case was a relatively early application of the developing linguistic technology. Yet the situation provided a fairly typical starting point, that is, the marketing team presupposed a certain mind set that was far off the mark of the actual customer point of view.

LINGUISTIC MOTIVATIONAL ANALYSIS FOR PERSUASION AND INFLUENCE

Ask a target audience the proper questions and they will tell you their preferences, quite literally, and how to change their preferences. Preferences exhibit themselves via explicitly *what they say* and structurally *how they say I*t. Therefore, linguistically speaking, the sentence represents the most persuasive and influential means of defining and addressing an audience. Linguistics' unique ability to analyze and score the language of the target audience provides insights beyond those of typical research. The results are immediately actionable for marketing, advertising, or sales interventions. The main principle: match the message to the content and structure of the audience mind-set.



Anti-Depressants

Consider the anti-depressant Pamelor. The prevailing wisdom among the competing drug companies selling anti-depressives was that psychiatrists were intent on making patients happy. The conceptual presumption was that psychiatrists were "obviously" *people* people. This belief framed their research efforts. As a result, market

researchers in the industry routinely *rediscovered* this presumption in their focus groups due to their biases and their lack of objectively effective tools to refute those biases. Consequently, most ads in the antidepressant industry represented "before-and-after" images showing illustrations of depressed patients transformed into happy, smiling patients.

In part, competitors were falling all over each other attempting to prove they offered more happiness than any other competitor. Their "motivational profiles" were not about the mind set of the psychiatrists in question. The client company as well as the industry's stagnant anti-depressant market (of this "tri-cyclic" type of anti-depressant) was the result of their erroneous frames and misconceptions about what to profile and how to profile the motives at issue. Ineffective profiles were constructed out of flawed projective research. The ineffective projective approach asked so-called creatively oriented questions such as: "Imagine that if this drug were a city, which city would it be?"

In contrast, the author asked psychiatrists systematic and superficially simple questions such as "What do you want the drug to do for you and the patient?" Other deceptively simple questions were asked: "What problems are you trying to solve with anti-depressants?" The answers were coded with linguistic tools such as the "Meta Model" (Bandler & Grinder, 1975; Grinder & Bandler, 1976).

The linguistic technology revealed that "patient happiness" at best was a secondary notion to the psychiatrists; happiness could *not* be prescribed but depression *could* be alleviated with the proper drug. The client company was shocked to learn that psychiatrists viewed patients, with a degree of clinical dissociation befitting a thoracic surgeon. Psychiatrists viewed patients as biological machines that did not behave as desired. Patients were problems in chemistry. "If I can get the right compound into them, and get an effective response quickly, they will stop calling me in the middle of the night, threatening suicide."

In addition, psychiatrists were distressed that anti-depressives generally took several weeks to become active in the patient's system - and very often the selected drug would not work at all due to individual differences in biochemistry. A psychiatrist might spend several months, using trial and error, to find a drug that would finally work, all the while dealing with depressed, often suicidal, patients. The situation was frustrating in the extreme to the physicians.

The client company had data handy that showed its drug did exactly what the psychiatrists wanted. But the data were not being used because of the prevailing beliefs about patient happiness driving the ad campaign. When the company was able to demonstrate its rapid onset of action with detailed technical information, the sale switched from an *emotional* orientation to one driven by *information*. The client company demonstrated that its drug, Pamelor, had a proven "3 out of 4" chance of working the very first time. It's sales soared. The side effect was that an entire segment of the pharmaceutical industry was reframed. Suddenly, conventional wisdom about anti-depressant rationales was overturned - patient happiness was replaced with drug effectiveness as a theme. This result occurred because of the power inherent in the linguistic tools used to make an objective finding of the motives in question by parsing motivation according to reliable and valid linguistic rules instead of subjective projective techniques.

LINGUISTIC MOTIVATIONAL ANALYSIS

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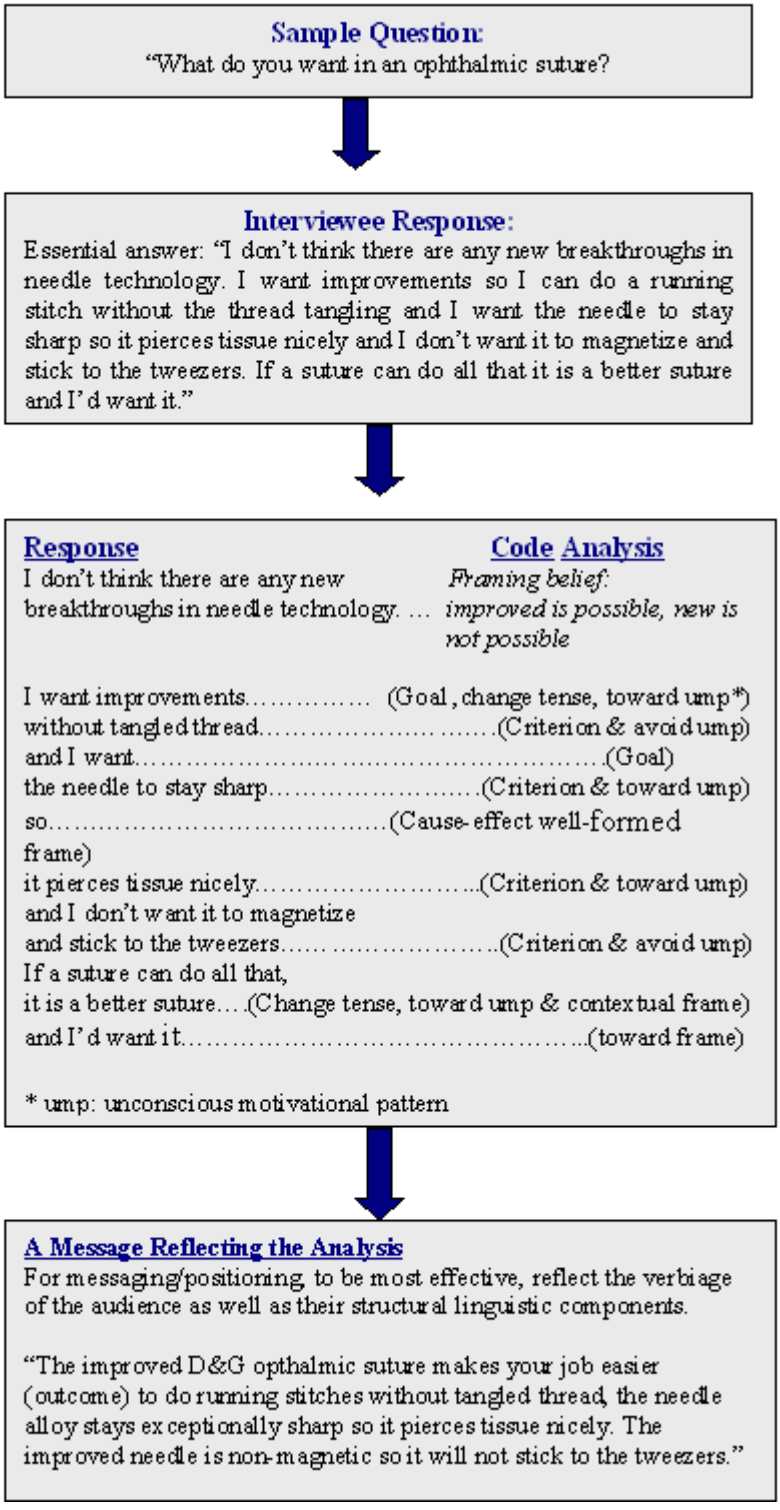

Conclusion

Predicting and changing human behavior is the essence of psychology. To have any chance of being on target, the technology, the tools, must match the task. One of the reasons for the frequent failures of marketing profiles - based on projective methods - is because there is no single, accepted projective-based method of getting to the heart of motivation. There are nearly as many theories and brands of projective consumer profiling as there are qualitative market researchers. This is not surprising when the essential differences of the two approaches are made clear.

Table 1.
Major Differences Between Projective and Forensic Motivational Profiling

Linguistic Characteristics	**Projective Characteristics**
Requires objective cause-effect rationale	Accepts subjective free-association
Operates on a mechanism of action	Operates on creativity and imagination
Based on evidence	Based on supposition
High Inter-rater reliability	Low inter-rater reliability

The linguistic state of the art in interviewing and profiling methods is not being applied in marketing because the inaccurate existing beliefs about what constitutes valid marketing research. Why doesn't the marketing world use the more productive and certain approach such as exists in linguistics? The answer is a mixed bag of self-interest, superstition and ignorance of the latest technology. So why do practitioners hold on to their fictions so strongly? Perhaps PEANUTS has an answer.

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In both marketing and law enforcement, one wants to assess the motives of the people in question. The undisciplined, opinionated, free-association method used in a projective marketing situation is almost certain to produce a profile of little or no use; an Ouija Board might do as well. Linguistics, like the diffusion of many innovations, such as the early airplane or the early automobile sometimes seems to suffer a bumpy road on its way to becoming conventional wisdom. There are stirrings, however. Clay (2002) reports on the uneven state of the art as psychologists attempt to look at advertising as science.

> There have been some significant strides made in the last 20 years. It's time to start applying these findings to real-world stimuli like advertising. (p. 41)

The needs driving linguistic applications of motivational profiling are simple: measure the actual motives. Do not measure inadvertent secondary phenomena such as the opinions of the researchers gathered accidentally by an implicit design-bias toward antique tools. Unless one is making real observations and coding those observations with a real technology, one will be producing *faction*, that is, a mix of fact and fiction - which is hardly effective when real results are at stake.

Linguistic motivational profiling technology has been around for about three decades, yet its use is uneven There are the usual tradeoffs with any innovation. For instance, non-native speakers of a given language may miss many of the subtleties of any particular research interview. To learn linguistic methods call for more than the ordinary three-day training seminar.

Many fields of expertise use language as a tool of choice. Anthropology, sociology, business, politics, education, advertising and communications, psychology, English, linguistics and other fields use it routinely. Linguistics is a wide topic with many sub-sets of expertise. One does not need to be a psychologist, however, to be able to profile motives. After all, spouses and parents anticipate the motives of family members every day. The real question is the varied levels of expertise required for a given context and application.

So, in sum, how do creative market researchers and hardened law enforcement specialists differ in their use of linguistic tools? As a rule, they are worlds apart. Law enforcement wants to know about evidence that proves motivation and leads to effective action. Market researchers, when using projectives, settle for opinions and impressions that, when put into action, often misfire.

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