



APPLICATION OF NEURO LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING INTO TEACHING AS A SUPPLEMENTARY APPROACH

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Annotation: This article deals with the main principles of neuro-linguistic programming in regards to teaching practices. It further discusses successful NLP practices in previous findings and presents some effective techniques and strategies within NLP. It can be applicable to use some NLP methods in real language classrooms.

Keywords: NLP (Neuro-linguistic programming), behavioral change, internal representations, humanistic programming, self-actualization.

Introduction

Teaching Languages methodology has always sought effective strategies and techniques to facilitate language learning. Improving language learners' communicative competence has become a task of language teachers. Neuro linguistic programming (NLP) is one of the most powerful psycho-techniques that allow language learners to improve their self-efficacy in an immediate way.

Neuro Linguistic Programming came into existence in 1970s as a result of collaborative work by John Grinder who was an assistant professor in linguistic faculty at the University of California, Santa Cruz with the psychology student at the same university, Richard Bandler. They both together worked investigating the actions of three well-known psychotherapists. One of them was Fritz Perls known as innovator of psychotherapy and the founder of Gestalt therapy which was one of the most influential therapy schools; another was Virginia Satir who solved many difficulty family problems that were unmanageable for other therapists and finally, the most famous hypnotherapist Milton Erickson.

Grindler and Bandler developed their idea and coined the term of "neurolinguistic programming" which combines three simple ideas. "Neuro" means behavior that originates in neurological processes of five senses. Our neuroscience not only process invisible information received by senses, but also it processes the visible reactions to outer world. "Linguistic" refers to the fact that we use language for communication; "programming" means the ways in which we organize our actions.

NLP is a set of techniques that provide information about individuals, the way they think (neuro), the way they communicate (linguistic), the way they create patterns for their behavior (programming). NLP practitioners make use of learner-specific or behavior-specific to regulate learners from failure to success with removal their hesitations, fear, worries in language learning and other mental factors that hinder language learning (Bandler & Grinder, 1975; Bandler & Grinder, 1979; Craft, 2001; Mathison, 2003).

NLP is a uniquely combination of several technical and behavioral practices found in Gestalt therapy (Perls 1969), Behavioural Psychology and Operant Conditioning (Skinner, 1953) Counselling (Rogers, 1983), Transformational Grammar (Grinder & Elgin, 1973), Educational Psychology (Thorndike, 1913) and cybernetics or artificial intelligence (Ashby, 1965).

NLP techniques can be efficiently used in other fields such as industry, business where psychological measurement and emotional intelligence determines employee productivity. However, the fact that distinguishes NLP in learning from its use in other fields is that NLP in learning emphasizes personal change and development of learners, indicating that learners are capable of modulating their behavior according to the way they see the world rather than the way the world exists.

Mathison 2003 interprets 'the map is not the territory' by Korzybski (Korzybski,1958) through a statement that human mind is not fixed or restricted territories. He further believes that NLP tries to understand how humans construct an experience or form a specific behavior through cognitive processes. NLP has proven to be effective in language learning, especially in a foreign or second language. NLP practitioners (Richards and Rodgers,2001; Millroad, 2004; Helm, 2009; Tosey and Mathison,2003; Mathison, 2003) assert that language educators are using at least one NLP technique with or without awareness of using it. Millroad, 2004 states that congruity of teaching methods of a teacher with the comfort level of students is also one form of NLP. Legall and Dondon (2006) further add that NLP contributes to behavioral development of learners strengthening emotional bond between teachers and students. NLP thus allows learners to explore internal representations in the subject being studied.

Mathison, 2003 suggested that "internal representations" refer to internal experience of any learner including smelling, tasting, hearing, feeling and physical movement. Helm, 2009 explained that when learners respond to verbal incentives, NLP regards their internal representations which evolved from verbal reports that grew to beliefs, values and behavior of them. He believed that these internal representations are likely to change while acquiring basic skills. Therefore, when a teacher should design an NLP model that allows to establish a link between behavioral and verbal cues or cognitive processes. Mathison, 2003 suggests that there is also a link between individual internal representations and their eye movement. NLP has several techniques that facilitate teaching language skills.

Implementation of NLP in teaching process is quite recent since it was first applied into psychotherapy and human sources development. However, insufficiency of materials that discusses the use of NLP was overcome after successful investigations have been made. The significance of these publication lies in the fact that they have investigated modeling together with effective NLP strategies (Tosey and Mathison, 2003, 2007; Churches and West Burnham, 2008; Terry and Churches, 2009; Peker, 2010; Tosey,2013). The findings of these investigations highlighted the importance of "anchoring, visualization, building rapport and representational abilities or learner styles" in creating a friendly atmosphere between students and teachers.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), those who concentrate on "humanistic approaches" that are related to self-awareness or "self-actualization" contributed to the emergence of NLP techniques as "training philosophy" in language teaching. However, it should be noted that NLP have been used unconsciously in language teaching for many years. Some other important findings in the field are derived from collaborative work by Tosey and Mathison (2003). According to them, following characteristics of NLP in relation to teaching can be seen:

- relationship between teachers and students as well as data transmission is mutual;
- people perform relying on the mental image of the world in their mind rather than the real world (it also supports the statement by Mathison 2003 "the map is not territory");
- In NLP, internal representations and an individual's language and behavior affect each other regularly which can be seen in processing experiences and internal representations;
- Successful strategies and techniques are unique and all of them are learnt. NLP emphasizes the learning context in which such strategies and techniques are learnt;
- 'neuro-physiological state' of learners affects their ability to learn strongly as their neuro-physiological state is connected with motivation to learn;

- When learning experience is expected to be fun in advance, learners' beliefs include beliefs about their learning capabilities and learning process itself and they are likely to change in NLP contexts.

The studies conducted to prove effectiveness of NLP in language teaching show that NLP intervention is effective in developing language skills and improving intrinsic motivation of learners as well. One of these studies conducted by Sciences and Humanities department in Saudi Arabia concluded that NLP helped to trigger a unique technique for students from different backgrounds to build rapport between them together with training learners with self-awareness. In this study, the researcher used three NLP techniques: Anchoring that dragged participants in a Circle of Excellence in which students repeat them to stay confident and relax during the whole experiment; Framing was deliberately chosen as the second NLP technique through which the way how participants differentiate emotions and memories was checked. When they narrate good and bad memories, framing was good and bad correspondingly which was detected by Eye accessing technique.

The other method used was Mirroring technique that was understood as a mimicking process in which learners imitate foreign accents. In order to provide success of this technique in a learning situation, mimicking should be so subtle so that they can be performed unconsciously.

Furthermore, it is proven that through NLP techniques, learners' motivation can be improved greatly. One of these studies conducted in Russia among EFL teachers by Radislav Millrood (2004) concluded that NLP techniques such as building a rapport with students, classroom procedure re-framing, leading the learner helped learners to discover more chances within learning together with scheduling success. Even though NLP has given a number of positive practices among practitioners, some psychologists are skeptical of his effectiveness regarding its eclectic nature (Gumm & Walker, 1992).

Jane Mathison at the University of Surrey in England confirms that NLP can offer solutions to teaching problems such as classroom management. In the doctoral study, "Neuro-linguistic programming: its potential for learning and teaching in formal education" which was presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, University of Surrey, September, 2003 by co-authors Jane Mathison and Paul Tosey, confirms that neuro-physiological state of learners (their curiosity rather than their boredom) strongly influence their capacity to learn. Such beliefs and states are also subject to change. Furthermore, their findings show that the potential of NLP is immense especially in language classrooms. It can be inferred from that Neuro Linguistic Programming is really helpful in classroom communication and lowering negative learning filters.

Pillars of Neuro-Linguistic Programming

There are four pillars of Neuro Linguistic Programming which state the key principles of NLP according to O'Connor and McDermott 1996; Revell and Norman 1997.

1. Rapport. "Rapport" is defined as "a close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well" in Oxford dictionary. Delbio and Ilankumaran (2018) state that effective communication is one of the main principles of NLP and building rapport is believed to diminish differences between individuals and increase similarities during communication. Silva (2017) claim that rapport or empathy is shaped by the techniques of NLP so that the teacher and students can build a close relationship, thus resulting in more productive learning environment that contributes to learning productivity and success. As we all are members of society in which we co-exist with other members, developing ability to build rapport is necessary.
2. Outcome thinking. This pillar regards your goals/aims and emphasizes precision. The more precise one wants to know what he/she wants, the more likely he/she will achieve something desired. It includes following steps:
 - consider your goal interesting and make it persuasive as much as you can;
 - Focus on your goal and direct your brain towards your objective, it makes goal-achieving much easier;

- visualize that you have achieved your goal and feel it, go back to your goal and try to go to the end;
- pay attention to all constituents of your goal such as actions, resources and people as well and focus on all of them to achieve your goal;
- Go back to the present with a new prospective and take an action.

In general, NLP is an outcome-oriented principle and emphasizes setting a clear goal and knowing your objectives. Setting a goal should also find a clear direction with awareness of its outcomes. Attitude towards your goal should emphasize positive effect which makes goal-achieving much easier.

3. Sensory awareness. It refers to using five senses to experience your surroundings. It means that through your senses you should realize what is happening in yourself and people around you. Awareness of what is working and what is not working is one of the keys to success most people fail to realize.
4. Behavioral flexibility. It refers to being adaptable to a situation. We should have a number of choices rather than limited ones in order to adapt to the situation. According to this pillar of NLP, we should continually change the way we accomplish things (our behavior) in order to get desired results. When we see that a strategy is not working, we should be flexible and change the steps until we get what we want.

In conclusion, Neuro-linguistic programming has great potential for all fields of life especially where communication is the biggest priority. Since the whole nature of NLP is a humanistic training philosophy, it leads success through realizing own self and contribute to greater results and it can improve not only students' performances, but also teachers' effectiveness in educational settings.

Even though it is commonly believed that NLP facilitates learning (improve motivation, teachers' effectiveness), due to lack of theoretical base, unclear evidences, insufficient evaluation of its practices, further empirical researches are necessary.

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