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Neuro-linguistic Programming in the English Classroom: Perceptions and Applications Among Teachers

Abstract

This study investigates the perceptions and practices of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) techniques among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, exploring their impact on communication skills and subject comprehension. The research focuses on eight key factors within NLP: flexibility, anchoring, elicitation, modeling, individual differences, leadership, building a relationship, and emotional and cognitive boosters. A sample of 20 EFL teachers in Medan, Indonesia, participated in this descriptive qualitative study, responding to a survey questionnaire adapted from previous research. The findings highlight a consensus among educators, showcasing their recognition of NLP's applicability and effectiveness across these factors. Teachers exhibit a strong commitment to student-centered pedagogy, emphasizing personalized interaction and visual learning experiences through board-based teaching methods. While the study acknowledges certain limitations, such as a small sample size and reliance on self-reported perceptions, it provides valuable insights for further research. Future studies can expand on these findings to explore NLP's influence on student outcomes and address potential implementation challenges.

Keywords: Neuro-Linguistic Programming, NLP, English learning, Perception, English Teacher.

INTRODUCTION

The field of education is ever-evolving, continuously seeking innovative methodologies to enhance the learning experience (Bonfield et al., 2020). One such approach that has stirred interest over the decades is Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP). Neuro-Linguistic Programming is a set of techniques, patterns, and strategies in helping to create effective communication, personal growth and development, and learning (Javadi & Asl, 2020). Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) was established in the 1970s by Richard Bandler, an information scientist, and John Grinder, a linguist. The concept behind "Neuro-linguistic Programming" suggests an interplay between the mind, language, and behavioral tendencies (Bandler & Grinder, 1975). NLP is often viewed as a technique to enhance communication or as a way to explore individual insights. Its principles have increasingly been recognized for potential applications in other sectors, including education (Keezhatta, 2019).

Several NLP methods have been incorporated into advanced teaching programs, especially those focusing on the English language, due to their recognized importance in enhancing communication abilities in instruction and deepening subject comprehension (Alroudhan, 2018; Lashkarian & Sayadian, 2015). This integration is particularly pertinent given the indispensable role of the English language in the global context. Serving as the lingua franca for international academia, English not only bridges diverse cultures but also fosters mutual understanding. The integration of NLP techniques into English teaching can be seen as a novel venture in this regard (Keezhatta, 2019). But any consideration of introducing a new methodology into classrooms must be rooted in the opinions and experiences of the educators themselves, who bear the responsibility of translating theory into practice (Ilyas, 2017).

Furthermore, Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) has garnered attention in the realm of English language teaching (ELT), with various scholars investigating its influence on different aspects of learning. One of the recent and comprehensive studies conducted in

this domain is by Zhang et al. (2023). Positive correlation has been found between the use of neurolinguistic programming and heightened levels of academic achievement among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Moreover, learners exposed to NLP techniques showcased improved emotional intelligence and critical thinking capabilities. This study underscores the comprehensive potential of NLP, not just in the context of linguistic proficiency but also in cultivating holistic cognitive and emotional skills.

Another notable research in this area was conducted by Moharamkhani et al. (2016) specifically targeted the vocabulary acquisition aspect of ELT. They found that EFL learners who were introduced to NLP techniques had a significant improvement in their vocabulary achievement scores compared to those who were not. This indicates the potential effectiveness of NLP in enhancing lexical retention and retrieval among learners. Lastly, Tarnopolsky (2016) offered a unique perspective by amalgamating NLP with suggestology and stage-acting in. This innovative approach highlighted the power of integrating NLP with other pedagogical methods. Tarnopolsky argued that by combining these techniques, teachers could create an immersive and engaging environment, fostering a more intuitive and expressive mode of language acquisition.

The literature above underscore the potential of NLP as a pivotal tool in ELT. From enhancing vocabulary achievement to promoting critical thinking and emotional intelligence, the integration of NLP techniques in English classrooms offers promising avenues for both educators and learners. However, the English classroom is a dynamic environment where educators continually seek effective strategies to enhance communication, comprehension, and student engagement (De Lurdes Martins, 2015). Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP), with its foundation in understanding human behaviors and thought patterns, has been posited as a potential tool to aid English instruction (Burstein et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, there is limited clarity on how English educators perceive NLP and to what extent they integrate its techniques into their teaching practices. Given the evolving nature of pedagogical methods and the quest for improved student outcomes, it is imperative to examine the perceptions and applications of NLP among English teachers. This will aid in determining the viability of NLP as an instructional tool and guide future training and curriculum development initiatives. By focusing on the perceptions and applications of NLP among English teachers, it aims to shed light on the practicalities, benefits, and challenges of introducing NLP techniques into the English classroom. Moreover, by understanding these perceptions, educational institutions and policymakers can make informed decisions about training, resources, and implementation strategies related to NLP through the lens of teachers' experiences and perceptions. It hopes to provide a comprehensive overview of the promises and challenges of integrating NLP into the English classroom.

METHOD

This study utilized a descriptive qualitative method and collected data via a survey questionnaire from English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. We engaged 20 English teachers affiliated with the English Education Study Programmes at various Medan universities. The selection of these participants was conducted using a purposive sampling method, ensuring that the sample was specifically chosen based on the study's criteria and purpose. Out of 20 EFL teachers, 17 reported being familiar with Neuro-linguistic

Programming (NLP) techniques, and 12 teachers indicated they actively use NLP strategies in their teaching. Furthermore, the instrument was adapted from Pishghadam and Shayesteh (2014) revalidation of Neuro-linguistic Programming, comprises 36 statements, and has eight factors: flexibility, anchoring, elicitation, modeling, individual differences, leadership, building a relationship, and emotional and cognitive boosters. It gained an overall reliability coefficient of r=0.82. For reference, Ursachi et al. (2015) determined that a reliability range of 0.6-0.7 or more is satisfactory. Data was collected using Google Forms. Upon collection, each response underwent meticulous examination for accuracy and completeness. The data was then compiled and analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

Participants conveyed their sentiments through a scale, with the value '1' indicating a 'Disagree' stance, '2' showcasing 'Undecided', and '3' representing 'Agree'. To ensure data clarity, participants' responses were mapped to specified intervals for a richer analysis. Those who scored between 1.0 to 1.49 were generally leaning toward disagreement. Responses that fell within the 1.5 to 2.49 range suggested neutrality or undecided sentiments. Finally, scores ranging from 2.5 to 3.0 denoted an inclination towards agreement. The distribution and acquisition of responses were facilitated through Google Forms. Once all the data had been collated, every single response underwent meticulous verification to ensure its completeness and validity. Microsoft Excel 2016 became an indispensable tool during the data analysis phase. Fraenkel (2012) defines Excel as a software application that enables the analysis of data through the use of tables and formulae, facilitating the calculation of various descriptive statistics such as means. Our primary analytical task was to pinpoint and understand the mean scores, comparing participants' answers to the aforementioned intervals and offering a clearer comprehension of their inclinations and sentiments in relation to the questionnaire items.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The exploration into the applicability and perceptions of Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) in the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching provides a unique lens into contemporary instructional methodologies. This section delves into the detailed responses and patterns observed among the participants, offering both expected outcomes and intriguing revelations.

Table 1. Flexibility factors of the NLP

No	statements	Mean score	interpretation
1	I expect my students to adjust themselves to my teaching rate.	2.8	Agree
2	I correct all the language learners' errors.	2.6	Agree
3	The learners can form groups freely.	2.7	Agree
4	I run the class in a formal way.	2.9	Agree
5	I make use of only one teaching method.	2.5	Agree
6	I do not make use of encouragement for my students' progress.	2.4	Undecide
	Overall	2.65	Agree

The survey findings illuminate the attitudes and instructional practices of educators in the context of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) techniques within the English as a

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Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Overall, there is a notable consensus among teachers on various aspects of their pedagogical approach. Teachers unanimously agree on the expectation that students should adapt themselves to the teaching pace, indicating a preference for a structured and uniform learning environment (El-Ashry, 2021). Additionally, there is a strong consensus regarding the necessity of correcting language learners' errors, highlighting the emphasis placed on linguistic accuracy in the learning process.

Teachers also express agreement when it comes to allowing learners to form groups freely, signifying a shared belief in the benefits of collaborative learning and student-driven group dynamics. Furthermore, educators favor a formal class structure and the use of a single teaching method, suggesting a preference for an organized, disciplined classroom atmosphere and a consistent pedagogical approach. However, there is some uncertainty among educators regarding the use of encouragement for students' progress, indicating potential variability in teaching philosophies and practices. These insights offer valuable perspectives on the pedagogical landscape and can inform discussions on effective teaching strategies in EFL education.

Table 2. Anchoring factors of the NLP

No	Statements	Mean Score	Interpretation
1	I ask successful language learners to talk about their personal ways of progress in the classroom.	2.7	Agree
2	I inform my students of their progress.	2.8	Agree
3	If needed, I ask the language learners to speak clearly.	2.5	Agree
4	I assign a special duty to every individual.	2.4	Undecided
	Overall	2.6	Agree

In the section concerning "Anchoring" in English Language Teaching Practices, a majority of teachers appeared to agree with several statements. For instance, many concurred with the practice of inviting successful language learners to share their personal strategies for progress in the classroom. This causes pleasant feelings and emotions in the students (Espinales & Moreno, 2021). Similarly, there was notable agreement on keeping students informed about their progress. The sentiment was also positive concerning clarifying instructions by asking language learners to speak more distinctly if necessary. However, when it came to the idea of assigning a specific responsibility to each student, the feedback was more mixed, with some teachers remaining undecided on its applicability or effectiveness. Overall, in this category, the predominant sentiment leaned towards agreement with the presented teaching approaches.

Table 3. Elicitation factors of the NLP

No	Statements	Mean Score	Interpretation
1	I get my students" ideas of the topics presented in the class.	2.7	Agree
2	I create new challenges for my students.	2.8	Agree
3	I welcome new and creative answers.	2.9	Agree

No	Statements	Mean score	Interpretation
4	I give feedback to my students" correct and incorrect answers	2.6	Agree
	Overall	2.75	Agree

For the "Elicitation" component of English Language Teaching, it is evident that a significant portion of teachers agree with the methods presented. Many teachers actively seek out their students' perspectives on class topics. Likewise, the practice of introducing new challenges to students is well-received. The openness to innovative and unique student answers is also a prominent approach among educators and leads to high motivation (Nazim & Yousaf, 2021). Offering feedback on both correct and incorrect student answers is a method that has garnered agreement. Overall, teachers tend to be in agreement with the elicitation techniques outlined in the study.

Table 4. Modeling factors of the NLP

No	Statements	Mean score	Interpretation
1	I write down the new subject material on the board as a model.	2.8	Agree
2	When the language learners do not understand a subject matter, I write it down on the board.	2.9	Agree
3	During the teaching process, I write down the new material on the board.	2.7	Agree
	Overall	2.8	Agree

The data strongly emphasizes the prevalent use of boards by educators as a primary tool for conveying subject material. Educators seem to favor the board as an essential instructional medium, specifically when introducing new content, as highlighted by the substantial agreement across all statements. Teachers not only use the board as a model when presenting new subjects but also as a clarifying tool whenever students exhibit confusion or lack of understanding. The consistent use of the board during the teaching process showcases its centrality in classroom dynamics. Overall, this reliance on board-based teaching methodologies underscores its significance in facilitating clear, visual learning experiences for students.

Table 5. Individual Differences Factors of the NLP

No	Statements	Mean Score	Interpretation
1	I pay attention to individual differences.	2.8	Agree
2	I help my students with less ability.	2.7	Agree
3	I pay attention to the language learners" eye movements.	1.3	Disagree
4	I give enough time to the language learners to write down notes and do class activities.	2.7	Agree
5	I try to create a positive feeling in my students toward language learning.	2.6	Agree
6	I make use of only one teaching method.	1.4	Disagree
	Overall	2.25	Undecide

The findings from the "Individual Differences" section shed light on educators' approaches and perceptions toward different teaching strategies. The majority of the participants resonate with the importance of recognizing individual differences among learners, highlighting a keen sense of adaptability in their teaching techniques. They also place emphasis on supporting students who might be lagging behind in terms of ability. Interestingly, a divergence is seen when it comes to the importance of observing students' eye movements, with most educators not considering it a critical aspect of gauging learner involvement or comprehension. Furthermore, teachers emphasize the significance of ensuring that students have ample time to note down lessons and partake in classroom activities. Creating a conducive learning environment where students harbor a positive outlook toward language learning is also deemed essential by the majority. However, a revelation comes in the form of teachers' inclination towards diversifying their teaching methods. Most participants reject the notion of sticking to a singular teaching method, thus underscoring the importance of versatility in pedagogical approaches.

Table 6. Leading factors of the NLP

No	Statements	Mean score	Interpretation
1	I give my students the words needed for a conversation.	2.7	Agree
2	For holding a dialogue, I present the required grammar.	2.8	Agree
3	For better learning and understanding, I ask the learners to take notes.	2.6	Agree
4	I ask my students about my teaching and speaking rate in the classroom.	2.5	Agree
	Overall	2.65	Agree

Within the "Leading" segment of the study, educators displayed a notable alignment with the proactive teaching strategies listed. There's a clear consensus that providing students with the necessary vocabulary for conversations is crucial. Similarly, presenting pertinent grammar for effective dialogue holds importance for them. Additionally, the majority found it essential for students to note down lessons for better understanding. Feedback about their teaching pace and speech in class is also considered vital by these educators. Overall, this section highlights that teachers actively lead their students toward effective language learning.

Table 7. Establishing Rapport Boosters factors of the NLP

No	Statements	Mean score	Interpretation
1	In answering the questions, I give hints to students.	2.7	Agree
2	I show my interest in the topics presented by my students.	2.8	Agree
3	During teaching, I use some of the words or phrases used by the language learners.	2.6	Agree
4	I ask my students to pay attention to the similarities and differences of the subjects.	2.9	Agree

| | | Overall | 2.75 | Agree |

In the Establishing Rapport section, the data underscores a strong alignment between teachers' strategies and positive student engagement. Educators generally agree on the importance of giving hints when answering questions, reflecting an approach that encourages independent thinking while providing a safety net. Similarly, there is a consensus on the significance of showing genuine interest in topics presented by students, fostering an environment of mutual respect. The practice of echoing back some of the words or phrases used by students during teaching further indicates a strategy to build rapport and validate student contributions. Lastly, directing students to identify both similarities and differences in subjects is recognized as an effective method to promote critical thinking. Collectively, these insights confirm that educators in the sample prioritize constructive interaction techniques that boost student participation and comprehension.

Table 8. Emotional and Cognitive Boosters Factors of the NLP

No	Statements	Mean score	Interpretation
1	I make use of flashcards, CDs, posters, and other teaching aids.	2.4	Undecided
2	I prefer to call my students by their first name.	2.8	Agree
3	I let the learners move freely in the classroom.	1.4	Disagree
4	I ask my students to pay attention to details.	2.7	Agree
5	I talk about myself and my own experiences in the classroom.	2.4	Undecided
	Overall	2.34	Undecide

Within the Emotional and Cognitive Boosters section, the results reveal mixed sentiments among educators. While there's a clear preference for using personal names when addressing students and a definite emphasis on urging students to pay attention to details, other areas evoke uncertainty. The use of teaching aids, such as flashcards, CDs, and posters, saw a split consensus, marking an undecided position. Similarly, sharing personal classroom experiences with students didn't find uniform acceptance, indicating another undecided area. Contrastingly, there's a clear disagreement with the practice of allowing students to move freely in class. Overall, this domain presents a diversified range of pedagogical beliefs and practices, with a predominant "undecided" sentiment.

CONCLUSION

This study delved into the perceptions and practices of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers regarding Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) techniques in the classroom. The findings illuminate a landscape where educators generally acknowledge the utility of NLP in bolstering communication skills and enriching subject comprehension. Notably, various aspects of teaching, such as flexibility, anchoring, elicitation, modeling, individual differences, leadership, building a relationship, and emotional and cognitive boosters, garnered consensus among teachers, reflecting a commitment to student-centered pedagogy. Moreover, the prevalence of board-based teaching methods underscores its pivotal role in visual learning experiences. The results indicate that within these eight factors, educators consistently demonstrate an alignment with NLP principles and techniques. This alignment extends across multiple dimensions of teaching, from adapting

to students' needs and fostering emotional connections to employing effective interaction methods and encouraging cognitive engagement. The consensus observed underscores the relevance and practical applicability of NLP in the EFL classroom. However, it is essential to recognize that the study's scope is not exhaustive, and further exploration is warranted to delve deeper into the nuances and potential variations within these factors.

Despite its insights, this study carries certain limitations. The sample size of 20 EFL teachers may not represent the entire spectrum of EFL educators, limiting generalizability. Moreover, the study's reliance on self-reported perceptions could introduce response bias. Additionally, the survey's interpretation relies on the assumption that respondents' self-reported actions align with their actual practices. To expand the scope of research in this domain, future studies could employ larger and more diverse samples, potentially spanning various regions and cultural contexts. A mixed-methods approach, incorporating classroom observations, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of NLP implementation across the eight identified factors. Additionally, exploring the influence of NLP techniques on student learning outcomes could shed light on its effectiveness. Further research could also investigate potential barriers or challenges faced by teachers in applying NLP strategies within these specific factors. Ultimately, enhancing our understanding of NLP's impact on EFL education across these multifaceted domains can lead to more tailored and effective teaching practices.

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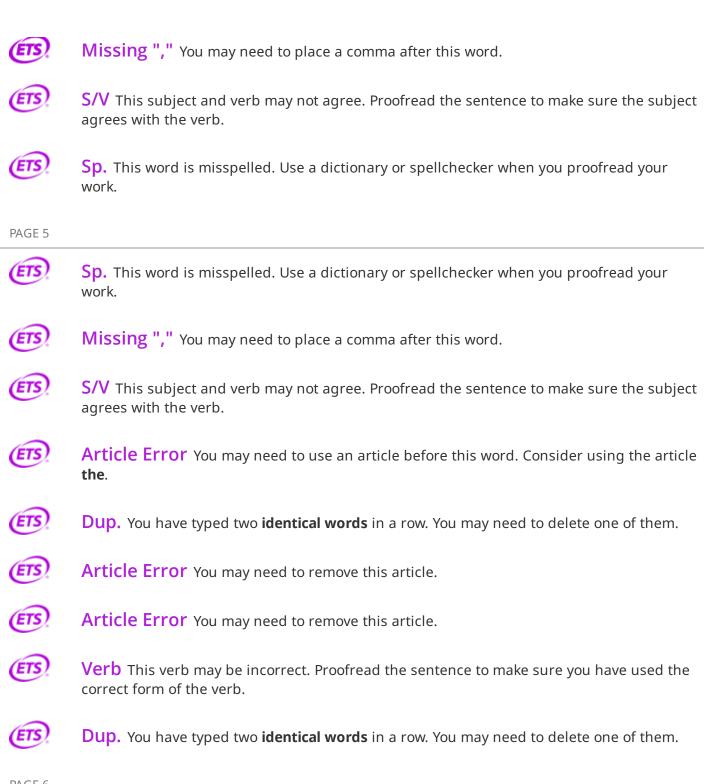**Prep.** You may be using the wrong preposition.

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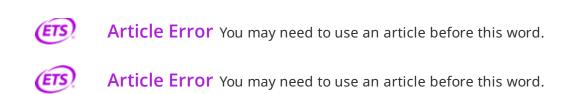**Missing ","** You may need to place a comma after this word.

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