

The Relationship between Neuro-Linguistic Programming and Anxiety and Self-Esteem among Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners

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Abstract – This study investigated the relationship between neuro-linguistic programming and anxiety and self-esteem among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. Sixty six pre-intermediate EFL learners involved in this study. The researcher selected randomly four classes. She used old methods for teaching control group and she used NLP and old methods for experimental group. Before she started the treatment, she gave the experimental group a demographic questionnaire, and then the experimental group received NLP treatment while the control group did not receive it. After six weeks they answered posttest and the researcher wanted them to answer the anxiety and self-esteem questionnaire. The experimental group also answered the perceptions and reactions about the NLP. After that, she collected the data from both groups, and she started to analysis the data by SPSS. The results of this study indicated that the NLP treatment did not have any significant effect on language anxiety for the experimental group, but NLP can help experimental group to increase their self-esteem. The perceptions of experimental group were completely positive. These findings explain that NLP can have some effects on learning EFL.

Keywords: NLP, anxiety, self-esteem , V-A-K

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning a second language is a complex especially for EFL learners who not only need to become able in the English language itself, but also learn content areas in English, depending on their level and school district curricula. EFL context, the public school in Iran now has a challenge given that a great number of English language learners are not performing in English at the required grade levels. Therefore, they are trying to study English in other centers as well as guidance schools or high schools such English institutes around the country.

Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) is a new method to language teaching that was developed in the early 1970s by John Grinder and Richard Bandler who studied the patterns and beliefs of people who excelled (Revell & Norman, 1997). NLP is fundamentally based on a series of assumptions about how the mind works and how people act and interact. The word "neuro" refers to the nervous system (brain).

A. Theoretical Framework

Neurolinguistic Programming gives teachers and students a tool to improve second language learning by changing unproductive learning habits to strategies for achievement used by successful and effective second language learners. NLP, for instance, may be used as a support technique for teaching and learning can provide us with an understanding of how students internalize information that turns into learning (Rosenberg, 2000). Such NLP techniques can make learning easy and fun and they can make an impact on education, particularly in English Language Teaching. In addition, by knowing how students' preferred representational system works (Learning styles), or how motivated a learner may be, practitioners can have them access these channels of communication (senses) to teach themselves how to learn better.

The role of anxiety as part of the emotional variables in foreign and second language teaching and learning has been studied extensively indicating that it can enhance or hinder second language acquisition. NLP can aid learners to reach optimum levels of anxiety-free states through some relaxation techniques. For instance, breathing deeply reduces the impact of negative emotions on the human body.

Another issue, which is worth mentioning, is that the Iranian EFL teachers do not have enough information about the new methods and approaches in teaching. Even when they are familiar with them; they do not have enough motivation to perform them in their classroom. Therefore, the present study can have good implications for these teachers.

The major reason for undertaking this study is to discover whether Neurolinguistic Programming as a new supplementary teaching approach can facilitate the acquisition of the English language. This study also examines the relationship between NLP and language anxiety and self-esteem in the experimental group students. Students' perceptions and reflections toward NLP classroom activities on such a group are also examined. As a result, the following research questions are set for conducting this study:

1. Does NLP significantly lower anxiety among Iranian EFL learners?
2. Does NLP significantly raise self-esteem in among Iranian EFL learners?
3. What are the perceptions and reactions of students toward NLP classroom techniques and their effectiveness?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Evolution of Traditional Second Language Teaching Approaches

Grammar Translation Method. Grammar Translation Method is one of the most traditional methods of foreign language teaching dating back to the late nineteenth century .Its goal was to produce students who could read and write in the target language by teaching learners rules and applications. Typical grammar-translation lessons were readings translated into the first language followed by the target rule. Several sentences were juxtaposed to demonstrate how such a rule worked. In this method, learners were expected to produce grammatical structures, error-free translations, directions, and explanations were given in the

first language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Because of this methodology, oral communication in the target language was practiced and developed very little.

The Audiolingual Approach. The Audiolingual Method is a language teaching method based on the assumption that language is acquired primarily by imitation, repetition, and reinforcement (Gas & Selinker, 2001), based on behaviorism (Skinner, 1975). Audiolinguism concentrated on the pattern of English syntactic structure and on the native-like pronunciation of English phonetics (Brown, 1987).

Communicative Language Teaching. At the beginning of the 1970's, interest in teaching real English language became more and more geared towards cultural and social settings. As a result, there has been a shift from audio-lingual and grammar translation methods to the research of Communicative Language Teaching (Das, 1984).

Communicative Language Teaching provided a framework for second language teaching without much concentration on descriptive grammar and more emphasis on oral language production. This method focused on the learners' ability efficiently uses the target language through language function in a different context. CLT involves learners in the classroom for meaning communication.

Focus on Form. Focus on Form is an innovative teaching approach that promises to bridge the gap between Grammar-based and Communicative Language teaching through the noticing of linguistic elements. Long (1991) originally coined "Focus on Form instruction" as a term referring to the intermittent, temporary, and explicit oral concentration by teachers and students on problematic grammar as well as lexical items during communicative interaction. Doughty and Varela (1998) view the implementation of Focus on Form in communicative teaching as effective teaching techniques but it should not interrupt communication flow among L2 learners. Lightbown and Spada (1999) indicate that Focus on Form teaching is suited to classrooms that are small enough to enable the instructor verbally address grammatical forms with which students may be having problems.

B. Neurolinguistic Programming: a New Teaching Approach

Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) is a collection of techniques, patterns, and strategies for assisting effective communication, personal growth, change, and learning (Blackerby, 1996). NLP was created in the early 1970s in Santa Cruz, California, when John Grinder, and Assistant Professor of Linguistics and Richard Bandler, a psychology student at that time.

Neurolinguistic Programming can be defined as the study of the structure of subjective experience and is based on the belief that all behavior has structure (Revell & Norman, 1997).

NLP is based on assumptions and beliefs about how the mind works and how people interact and learn. Otsch (2000) defines Neurolinguistic Programming as follows:

Linguistic: comes from neurological processes through which human beings experience and process information using the five senses (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, and gustatory). It also refers to the nervous system (brain) and is the idea that all

behavior has a structure. Indicates that we use language, verbal and Non-verbal, to express our feelings and thoughts.

Programming: refers to our ability to organize our ideas

Neuro: and actions to achieve specific goals and results.

Each person has a physical location in the brain where the experiences are sent, processed and stored (Bandler, 1985). Although most people tend to have a preferred sense for taking in information, it is important to help learners discover their styles. In that way, learners work and develop the senses they use to maximize potential learning. Thus, one of the NLP basic skills is to recognize how people are thinking.

Visualization is a primordial element within NLP. However, this decisive skill is used very little in formal education settings. Michel Grinder (1991) utilizes this technique in the educational arena and bases his visualization activities on the Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic system within Neurolinguistic Programming.

Since Neurolinguistic Programming addresses the learning styles of learners, instructors must be fully aware of certain students' physical, cognitive, linguistic, and behavioral elements students displayed while processing and learning information through the five senses. Even though it is very important to know learners' representational or preferred system, Miller (1981) indicates that instructors need to know how to establish an effective communication with the learner by staying tuned within the same visual, auditory, or kinesthetic channel of communication. Miller (1981) also argues that it has been demonstrated that individuals, according to their preferred system indicated in Table 1 use certain predicates.

Table 1: V-A-K Predicate Systems

Channel of Communication	Nouns	Verbs	Expressions
Visual	Picture, imagine, point of view, perspective, focus, insight, glimpse	Illustrate, inspect, survey, examine, focus, look, glance, observe, visualize	"I see what <i>you</i> mean", "Looks good to me", "Picture this", etc.
Auditory	sound, tune, tone, voice, value, and echo	Listen to, hear, yell, scream, sing, speak, talk, tell, etc.	"That rings a bell", "That's music to my ears", "I'm all ears", "To tell <i>you</i> the truth"
Kinesthetic	Feelings, sensations, temperature, emotion, pasture, weight	Bite, burst, break, fall, catch, grasp, grab, hold, struggle, throw, jump, and walk	"Give someone the cold shoulder", "It feels good", "Touch bases", "Get a grip on it"

As is seen in the charts above, each type of learner requires different kinds of input for effective learning. Revell & Norman (1999) explain that the following input needs to be taken into account for each learning style. *Visual*: mind maps, diagrams, pictures, charts, photographs, drawing, overheads, mime, etc. *Auditory*: brain gym, questionnaires, Simon says, games, role-play, acting out, videos, activity stories and some others. *Kinesthetic*: cassettes, videos, discussion, songs, speaking aloud, role-play, rhyme, repetition, etc.

Rapport as input, according to NLP, is the foundation of good teaching because teachers need to develop good lines of communication with students in classroom settings. Webster (1984) defines “rapport” as a relationship marked by harmony, conformity, accord, or affinity. When a teacher and a student are in harmony or “rapport,” it is much easier to teach the student. In order to develop rapport, the teacher needs to develop similar behaviors of the student and this can be accomplished by a technique called, “mirroring.”

C. The Impact of Neurolinguistic Programming on Anxiety

Anxiety is an important emotional factor in the learning process. The role of anxiety as part of the emotional variables in foreign and second language teaching and learning has been studied extensively, indicating that it can enhance or hinder second language acquisition. MacIntyre & Gardner (1989), and Guiora (1983) argued, “Language learning is a profoundly unsettling psychological proposition because it directly threatens an individual’s self-concept and world view.” (p. 8)

Scovel (1978) defines Language Learning Anxiety as a feeling of tension, apprehension, and nervousness associated with the situation of learning a foreign or second language.

In a study conducted on English-speaking children learning French by immersion, Swain (1995) found a negative correlation between anxiety and one measure of the children’s proficiency in French. However, he did not find any other correlation. Nevertheless, other correlations like anxiety and the affective or emotional aspect may hinder the second language acquisition of a learner. He finally reported that serious language anxiety may cause other related problems with self-confidence, self-esteem, and risk-taking ability, and ultimately hinders proficiency in the target language.

Neurolinguistic Programming can be a valuable tool to reduce anxiety and access resourceful mental states for self-esteem and self-efficacy in ESL/EFL learners. This can be exemplified by a technique called, “Brain Gym.” This technique originally started with the creation and use of Neurolinguistic Programming. Brain Gym consists of simple movements to accomplish important developmental steps for the coordination of eyes, ears, hand, and the whole body that help reduce stress and anxiety in recipients (Ibarra, 1997). Ibarra also explains that Brain Gym movements have shown over years of clinical experience and research reports to prepare learners with the physical skills needed to improve reading and writing. The ultimate goal of brain gym is creating a functional mind/body system.

“Anchor” in NLP is an association of a gesture or word and the act of salivation being the desired state (Yeager, 1985). This useful tool can be used in second language teaching as

well as in other types of circumstances. By establishing an anchor (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic), the instructor can change any unwanted feelings such as fear, anxiety, and some phobias into more resourceful states such as relaxation, enthusiasm, school attitude, and self-esteem.

Suggestopedia is another second language teaching approach developed by a renowned Bulgaria research psychologist Georgi Lozanov. This method bases its principles on stress-free and low-anxiety teaching in nonthreatening second language learning. Lozanov (1978) argues that as one gets older, one accepts social norms and adjusts one's personalities to conform to them. The capabilities children use are saved and preserved as functional reserves. Based on his assertions, these reserves can be re-integrated into active personalities by the use of suggestions. Consequently, according to him, the appropriate use of these suggestions results in the enormous increase in the individual's ability to learn.

D. The Impact of Neurolinguistic Programming on Self-Esteem

Speaking a second language is believed to be the most difficult of the four language skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking) to acquire in a second or foreign language classroom setting. Because of this, it requires a great deal of self-esteem, self-confidence, and motivation to take a risk and speak up without worrying about making mistakes. Heyde (1977) defines self-esteem as “the sum of one's attitude toward oneself -the evaluation of what a person feels he/she is.

Learning a second language may represent an emotional threat to a person's self-confidence and willingness to understand the target culture and its language as well. Self-esteem has a significant correlation between learner's personality attributes and oral communication apprehension (Daly & Stafford, 1984).

Many times students struggle in school and think that just because they do not do well academically, they see themselves as unintelligent or that they cannot learn or are not good students. In the ESL/EFL classroom, a great number of learners get frustrated for their inability to learn a second language; therefore, they truly believe they will not learn English; therefore, their self-esteem drops and they give up on themselves. In addition, they consider themselves poor learners and their self-concept is affected as well. NLP offers these students alternative-learning strategies so that they can change these limiting beliefs from “I can't learn” to “I can learn.” This new positive belief can lead to resourceful states to succeed in school (Blackerby, 1996).

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

Four intact pre-intermediate classes, which were randomly assigned to be control or experimental groups, participated in this experiment. Students in this study were English foreign language learners studying English at third grade of high school student in Sirik at pre-intermediate level, ranging between 16-18 years old. Two classes served as the control

group and the other two formed the experimental group, which received NLP treatment. The total number of control group participants were 35 including 18 males and 17 females and the total number of experimental group participants were 31 including 17 males and 14 females.

B. Instruments

This investigation used various methods of data collection through instruments as follows:

Demographic questionnaire. Demographic information questionnaires were administered to each student. The demographic information collected pertinent data regarding age, gender, and methods for learning English. The number of years completed in English courses was also collected as part of this data.

Second language proficiency test. The Secondary Language Proficiency Test (SLEP) was created by The California Department of Education and is currently being used by school districts that serve English Language Learners. This test also includes a writing section in which students write a descriptive essay. This essay was administered to both control and experimental group students at the beginning and the end of the treatment period. Two EFL teachers who read pre- and post- essays from both groups of students utilized an essay score rubric created by the school district.

Language anxiety inventory. An inventory that measures language anxiety adopted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was utilized in this study. This inventory has been used in many studies of anxiety in foreign and second language learning and is found to be a highly reliable measure (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). It was administered to each student before and after the treatment. This inventory has been used to determine the language anxiety levels students experience while learning English during the class activities.

Self-esteem inventory. An inventory about self-esteem and self-confidence, which also consisted of 12 questions, was administered to each student before and after the treatment. This inventory identified important self-esteem and self-confidence issues that keep students from feeling able to utilize the target language more freely and comfortably.

Student reactions questionnaire. A student reflection journal was assigned to the experimental group at the end of this study. Students were asked to describe their reactions and perceptions about the new teaching technique (NLP) and its effectiveness in second language learning.

C. Procedures

This study was carried out for a period of six weeks during fall semester. After getting permission from the school Principal, four classes were selected for this study. Two classes for the control and two for the experimental groups were randomly selected. These groups might not be equally proficient; however, their proficiency level was determined by the pre-

and post-test scores and proficiency placement criteria established by school. Since experimental group students' participation in this study is voluntary, this right was fully honored and respected. The researcher briefly explained to the experimental group students by telling them that the researcher wanted to try out some new techniques for teaching English. In addition, the anxiety and self-esteem concepts were briefly explained to participants as well. It was emphasized that participation was voluntary and the information collected was confidential.

The teaching methods used in both groups were a combination of Audio-lingual, Grammar Translation, Communicative Language Teaching, and Focus on Form teaching approaches. The instruction delivered to the experimental group also included NLP principles (treatment) delivered through NLP teaching strategies.

D. Treatment

The experimental group received the treatment through the application of NLP concepts and principles as a supplementary teaching approach while the students in the control group used traditional methodologies; however, the experimental group was the only one receiving NLP treatment. It is explained as follows:

Anxiety. Neurolinguistic Programming can also be a valuable tool to reduce anxiety and access optimum learning states for self-esteem and self-confidence in ESL/EFL learners. For instance, NLP uses a series of body exercises called "Brain Gym." This technique consisted of a series of exercises designed to help learners coordinate their brains and their bodies better. Dennison (1994) explains that brain gym promotes efficient communication among the many nerve cells and functional centers located throughout the brain and body. He finally suggested several exercises, which promote such equilibrium mentioned above. These exercises include brain buttons, cross crawl, hook-ups, and the alphabet.

Brain buttons consist of standing up with moderately spread legs. The left hand over the belly bottom lightly pressing it; the index and the thumb fingers pressing the carotid artery. This exercise allows the brain to be alert and normalizes the blood pressure.

The "Cross Crawl" consists of touching the left knee with the right hand and the right knee with the left hand in slow motion. This allows both hemispheres to communicate to each other and thus promoting optimum mental states for learning. The "Hookups" is another brain gym exercise in which the student crosses his legs and intertwines his arms and both hand across his chest. While doing this, the student lays his or her tongue onto his or her upper palate. This exercise allows students to lower stress and promote learning.

The alphabet was also another exercise in which students are shown the alphabet on the board with three different letters underneath each alphabet letter mixed up (L = left, R = right, B = both). Every time the student calls out an alphabet letter, either he or she has to lift the right, left, or both arms simultaneously depending on the letter (L, R, and B) indicated underneath each letter of the alphabet.

While tightening or loosening his or her fist, the student visualizes a nice or pleasant experience for three minutes. During this time, the student saw and experienced a nice moment in his/her mind in which he or she felt relaxed and self-confident. Ultimately, this anchor would unconsciously reduce the students' anxiety when he/she activated such anchor. Table 2 shows the duration of the different activities for both the experimental and control groups carried out accordingly for this theme. They are described below:

Table 2: Learning Activities for both experimental and control Groups

Experimental	Control
1. Brain Gym exercises (10- minute daily warm-up activity modeled by the teacher).	1. Usual spelling and grammar correction activity (10- minute daily warm-up activity).
2. Baroque music played in the background daily during class work and testing.	2. No music played during daily class work and testing
3. Anchor activation while speaking English before the class to reduce anxiety (90-minute oral presentation activity once every two weeks).	3. Speaking English before an audience (90-minute oral presentation activity once every two weeks).

Self-Esteem. For many students, speaking a second language in the classroom often requires a great deal of self-esteem and self-confidence. The researcher tried to select some fables. These stories were carefully selected to connect language and culture. The ultimate goal for these fables was then to offer positive life lessons that somehow increased students' self-esteem.

According to NLP, if they know specifically what they want, they will achieve it. Students knew exactly what they wanted to do in the treatment activities, and they were able to write their goals down. By seeing, hearing, and feeling such accomplishment through a motion picture, this visualization could help build an individual's self-esteem. Table 3 describes the learning activities for both experimental and control groups as follows:

Table 3: Activities for Building Self-Esteem

1. Fables that connect L1 to L2. Life lesson stories specifically selected for building self-esteem -30- minute summarization activity (identity level).	1. A short story selection for Summarization (30-minute activity)
2. Written (for example, "this (assignment) tells me that You are a responsible student.") and verbal praising comments about students'	2. Usual written or verbal comments about students' performance in times of academic success or failure

performance (for example, "You're a very capable student. I am very proud of you.") In times of academic success or failure (Capability level).	
3. Teacher or student rapport (for example, smiling, and language verbs).	

Second Language Acquisition. Neurolinguistic Programming can give teachers and students a tool to improve second language acquisition by changing unproductive learning habits to strategies for achievement used by successful and effective second language learners (Robbins, 1991).

The Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic system is determined by the eye accessing cues exemplified by Dilts (1992) who claims that automatic unconscious eye movements indicates how a person thinks and processes information (up visual-images, sideways = auditory-sounds, down = kinesthetic-feelings). The researcher purposefully used this information obtained from the "What type of learner are you?" Questionnaire so that the researcher could identify each student's preferred system. Thus, the researcher kept in mind the preferred system each student used in class, so appropriate help was provided when the need arose during classroom tasks.

NLP teaching strategies were applied to the experimental group, whereas teaching strategies from traditional methods such as the Audio-lingual, Grammar Translation, and Focus on Form were applied to the control group. Language skills (listening, writing, and speaking) were delivered to both experimental and control groups through activities and teaching strategies prepared by the researcher. Reading comprehension skills will be slightly taught although this class's emphasis was writing.

Listening. Table 4 shows the different teaching activities and strategies needed for this language skill.

Table 4: Listening Activity

Experimental	Control
Activity -Listen to stories and answer comprehension questions on information not mentioned in the text -Listen to dialogues and describe the people and the background	Activity -Listen to stories and answer comprehension questions on information mentioned in the text -Listen to dialogues and answer directed questions
Strategy: create mental Images through visualization (V-A-K system) for more retention and recall of information.	Strategy: Answer Comprehension questions. No mental images required.

Reading. Table 5 shows the different teaching activities and strategies needed for this language skill.

Table 5: Visualization Activities for Reading Comprehension

Experimental	Control
Activity: 1. Fiction and nonfiction Passages. Strategy: Creation of mental images for better recall of information accessed by looking up - summaries -Predictions -Clarification	Activity 1. Fiction and nonfiction passages. Strategy: Guided Reading Comprehension Questions. -Summaries -Predictions -Clarification

Writing. The writing component was the language skill of emphasis in the classes. In many cases, Iranian EFL students felt apprehensive when it came to producing a piece of writing in the target language in lower levels. several "Goal Setting" activities for writing activities in the experimental group students were done through visualization, which according to research; builds up self-esteem (Revell & Norman, 1999). Table 6 includes teaching strategies for paragraph, and essay organization as shown below:

Table 6: Teaching Strategies for Paragraph Organization

Experimental	Control
Activity 1: Writing a descriptive paragraph with a topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence Strategy: Visual association of a paragraph with a table. The topic sentence is the top part of the table, the supporting points are the legs, and the concluding sentence is the base on which the table stands.	Activity 1: The same as experimental group. Strategy: Explanation of paragraph organization with no visual association
Activity 2: Develop a descriptive paragraph of students' favorite place Strategy: visualization of such place through visualization (what they see, hear, and feel.	Activity 2: The same as the experimental group Strategy: No visualization required

Speaking. Table 7 shows the classroom activities and teaching strategies utilized for instruction delivery for both experimental and control groups.

Table 7: Teaching activities for speaking skill

Experimental	Control
Activity: free communicative conversations about everyday life topics. Strategy: pair-up conversational by modeling famous English-speaking people.	Activity: The same as experimental group Strategy: The same as experimental group, but modeling required.

The statistical procedures conducted for data analysis of both groups in this study are shown below:

1. Quantitative data were analyzed through the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS).
2. T-tests for independent samples on pre- or post-tests and gain scores were also used to calculate mean differences for essay scores, anxiety inventory, and self-esteem inventory.
3. Experimental group students' reactions/reflections generated NLP treatment themes, which were analyzed and reported in qualitative data

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

A. Anxiety

Research question 1. *Does NLP significantly lower anxiety among Iranian EFL learners?*

Both groups showed positive gains, which indicates that their level of anxiety actually decreased. Regarding group differences between the pre- and the post-test scores, there was no statistical difference for either group ($p > .05$). Table 8 also shows the difference between the gain scores for the two groups was also not significant ($p > .05$). This means that the NLP treatment did not have a significant effect on language anxiety for the experimental group.

Table 8: Anxiety Pre-/Post- T-tests for Equality of Means for Control (1) and Experimental (2) Groups

Group	N	Pretest mean	Pretest SD	Posttest mean	Posttest SD	Gain score mean	Gain score SD	t	Sig.
Control	35	36.74	7.64	38.14	1.97	1.4	7.87	-3.12	0.09
Experimental	31	37.02	6.54	38.56	1.65	1.54	8.94	-2.87	0.07

B. Self-Esteem Inventory

Research question 2: *Does NLP significantly raise self-esteem in EFL students?*

Group differences between pre- or post-test scores showed a statistical difference for both groups ($p < .001$). However, the control group experienced a loss of self-esteem while the experimental group's self-esteem significantly increased during the treatment period. Table 9 also shows results that there was a highly significant difference between the gain score means of the two groups ($p < .001$). This indicates that NLP appears to have caused a greater increase in the self-esteem of the student in the experimental group.

Table 9: Self-Esteem Pre- or Post- T-tests for Equality of Means for Control and Experimental Groups

Group	N	Pretest mean	Pretest SD	Posttest mean	Posttest SD	Gain score mean	Gain score SD	t	Sig.
Control	35	38.00	5.65	33.37	5.13	-5.38	7.68	-5.12	0.02
Experimental	31	37.00	5.14	41.62	4.86	4.62	8.92	-4.97	0.007

C. Language Proficiency Test (SLEP)

On the pretest, the mean scores of the control and experimental groups were significantly different ($p < .05$), with the experimental group scoring significantly higher than the control group ($p < .01$). Therefore, the two groups did not begin with a similar proficiency level. The difference between the pretest and post-test means was significant for both the control group ($p < .01$) and the experimental group ($p < .001$). Within groups, the difference between the pre- and post-test scores was significant for both the control ($p < .01$) and the experimental group ($p < .001$). Finally, the mean score gain of the experimental group was significantly higher than the control group (7.05 vs. 5.23).

Table 10: Second Language Proficiency (SLEP) T-tests for Mean Gain in Control and Experimental Groups

Group	N	Pretest mean	Pretest SD	Posttest mean	Posttest SD	Gain score mean	Gain score SD	T	Sig.
Control	35	75.14	11.32	80.37	12.64	5.23	8.17	-4.31	0.02
Experimental	31	82.47	10.76	89.52	10.86	7.05	7.85	-4.16	0.005

D. Descriptive Essay Scores

Two EFL teachers read essay scores by both control and experimental groups. Inter-rater reliability was not significant (.36) with a very low correlation (.42). Because of this, for the essays whose score difference was different from .5 points (on a 6-point scale); a third

reader was asked to read those essays. The mean from the three scores was taken. Finally, the new scores were used to calculate the means for the t-tests. The researcher used SPSS for analyzing these data. In regards to within group differences between the pre- and post- test scores, there was not a significant difference for the control group. However, there was a significant difference for the experimental group ($0.04 < .001$) in which the post-test scores were significantly higher than the pretest scores (3.90 vs. 2.14). These results indicate a significant effect on writing skills for students in the experimental group. In addition, Table 11 shows the difference in mean gain scores approached significance. This indicated that the experimental group gains were higher than those in the control group were.

Table 11: Essay Scoring Rubric Pre- or Post- T-tests for Equality of Means for Control and Experimental Groups

Group	N	Pretest mean	Pretest SD	Posttest mean	Posttest SD	Gain score mean	Gain score SD	T	Sig.
Control	35	2.67	.47	2.76	.52	0.4	.32	-2.42	0.32
Experimental	31	2.14	.26	3.90	.41	1.5	.38	-2.63	0.04

Research question 3: *What are the perceptions and reactions of students toward NLP classroom techniques and their effectiveness?*

The experimental group students expressed their perceptions toward NLP on the end of the study. They answered a questionnaire which consisted of 10 questions ranked on a 1-5 Likert Scale being one = Strongly Disagree to five = Strongly Agree. In this case, the higher the number (5) the more positive the students' experience with the new teaching approach was. Table 12 shows the results of students' perceptions of Neurolinguistic Programming as a new learning approach. All components were rated positively; that is, they received a mean score of 3.0 or above. Responses to the items are listed from higher to lower ranking based on the means.

Table 12: The results of students' perceptions of Neurolinguistic Programming

Mean	Question
4.82	The classical music I heard in the background while working in class helped me feel relaxed.
4.37	I felt comfortable when I acted out in the class.
4.57	I felt comfortable learning English.
4.51	I felt comfortable speaking English in the class when I acted out a famous English-speaking person in the class.

4.41	The pictures of a hamburger and a table helped me remember to organize my ideas into a three-Paragraph essay.
4.37	The visualization technique helped me see and recall information more vividly during my writing assignments.
4.38	I was able to understand a story when I made mental pictures.
4.40	The body movement exercises helped me feel relaxed and ready for class work.
4.45	Looking up and seeing words in my mind, and spelling them forward and backwards helped me improve my spelling skills.
3.75	The new teaching technique made me feel comfortable when speaking English.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A. Anxiety

According to results, anxiety levels experienced by both control and experimental groups went down. However, the difference between the gain scores was not significant. Therefore, the NLP treatment did not significantly reduce anxiety in the experimental group. The results obtained might have been affected by different factors such as student behavior and attitude towards NLP activities such as the brain gym, the alphabet, and kinesthetic anchoring. On the one hand, brain gym and the alphabet have been shown to help individuals with coordination of eyes, ears, hand, and the whole body that help reduce stress and anxiety in recipients (Ibarra, 2003). On the other hand, kinesthetic anchoring also allows individuals to avoid unwanted feelings, such as anxiety or stress. These feelings can be changed into more resourceful states like relaxation and self-esteem along with classical music in the background (Hill, 1984). In conclusion, students' attitudes towards activities and length of treatment could have been possible causes for NLP strategies not to statistically lower levels of anxiety.

B. Self-Esteem

T-tests in this study indicated that students in the experimental group's self-esteem significantly increased, while the self-esteem in the control group did not. The reason for such a loss could have been communication between control and experimental group students since they knew each other. This communication could have resulted in potential contamination between the two groups. The high self-esteem the experimental group experienced in this study may be because that NLP takes into consideration the emotional state of a learner towards education, particularly in second language learning. The statistical significance in self-esteem evaluated in this experiment focused mainly on the importance of learners' feelings. In sum, addressing students' limiting beliefs, maintaining a good rapport with them, and goal-setting activities made a positive and significant impact on raising their self-confidence and self-esteem in the classroom, as demonstrated by their significant increase in self-esteem as measured on the self-esteem inventory.

C. Second Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition is a very lengthy and complex process. It develops through stages that may take long periods for learners to achieve proficiency (Pienemann, 1984). Test scores from the Secondary Language English Proficiency (SLEP) test and ratings from a descriptive essay measured second language acquisition in this study. After analyzing data on both instruments, mixed results were obtained.

Findings in the language proficiency test and essay scores revealed that while the two groups did not begin with a similar proficiency level, both groups significantly improved at the end of the six weeks. Nevertheless, the language proficiency gains by the experimental group were significantly greater than the control group. The researcher attributes such a gain difference might have been due to visualization. This skill is a primordial element within NLP (Grinder, 1991). In conclusion, visualization played an important role in increasing language proficiency in the experimental group since it provided students with useful tools they used to improve their English skills according to results in this experiment. This skill is easy to learn and helps students of all ages become more creative with their ideas in the classroom.

D. Pedagogical Implications

Findings in this study have yielded relevant pedagogical implications for second or foreign language teaching and learning. If teachers know how their students' preferences for processing information helps them learn, they can make necessary changes in the strategies for curriculum delivery. In sum, ESL/EFL practitioners may find important benefits to integrating NLP as a supplementary teaching approach for children, young adults, and adults. Learning languages is not about lecturing or staying quiet or still while working on assigned tasks. Learning a second language is a much more complex cognitive and emotional process. It is about feeling good about oneself, having fun, and enjoying the experience in a stress free learning environment.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

Read each question carefully and mark your answers below:

1. If I could spend 1,000,000.00 in one of the items below, which would it be?
 - A) a new mattress
 - B) a new stereo
 - C) a new T.V. set
2. What do I like to do?
 - A) Stay home and eat home-made food
 - B) Go to a concert
 - C) Go to the movies
3. If I decided to do something instead of going on vacation, what would I do?
 - A) go to a conference
 - B) go walking
 - C) stay home and rest
4. Which of these settings do you like?
 - A) one with a beautiful panoramic view
 - B) one in which you can feel the ocean breeze
 - C) one with a calm place
5. What event would you like to attend?
 - A) A wedding
 - B) An Art Galley Exposition
 - C) A get together
6. How do you consider yourself?
 - A) Athletic
 - B) Intellectual
 - C) Humanitarian
7. How do you prefer keeping in touch?
 - A) By mail
 - B) By phone
 - C) Eating together
8. How do you like to spend your free time?
 - A) Talking with someone
 - B) Caressing someone
 - C) Contemplating something

9. If can't find your car keys, what do you do?
 - A) Look for them everywhere
 - B) Check your pockets to hear the clattering
 - C) Look for them touching things
10. If were to stay in a deserted island, what would you take with you?
 - A) Some good books
 - B) A portable radio
 - C) Your sleeping bag
11. How do you like to dress?
 - A) Impeccable
 - B) informal
 - C) Very formal
12. What type of clothing do you prefer wearing?
 - A) new wave
 - B) very elegant
 - C) comfortable
13. If you had a lot of money, what would you do with it?
 - A) buy a nice house and live in it
 - B) travel around the world
 - C) become a well-known person
14. If you could choose, What would you be?
 - A) A great doctor
 - B) A famous musician
 - C) A great painter
15. What is the sexiest thing to you?
 - A) Dimmed lights
 - B) Perfume
 - C) Certain kind of music

Appendix B

Scoring Range Rubric and Second Language English Proficiency Test

Directions

Describe your best friend OR favorite family member. Write about the person's general character (positive and negative). Describe his/her physical appearance (you can mention clothing styles, grooming habits, mannerisms, etc.) Tell about a memorable experience you have had with this person and give some idea of why your relationship is special or unique. Your writing should be in the form of an essay (body, introduction, and conclusion) with an appropriate title.

Scoring Range Rubric

Each category is worth 0-6 points

0= off topic

1 =minimum evidence of proficiency 2= some evidence of proficiency

3= developing proficiency

4= proficiency

5= exceeding expectations 6=outstanding

Directions: Add points and divide by 10 to yield a score of 0-6

Content

-----The writer has an effective opening which captures the reader's interest

-----The writer clearly identifies the person to be described

-----The writer is able to describe a past event that supports the person's traits

-----The writer is able to describe the events with sensory details.

-----The writer leaves the reader with a clear impression of this person

Organization

-----The writer demonstrates an effective organization in which there is an introduction, body, and conclusion of the essay

-----The writer demonstrates a good coherence by using transition words

-----The writer concludes with a description or reflection about the subject

Conventions

-----The writer makes few errors in grammar and usage.

-----The writer makes few errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

Appendix C
Language Anxiety Inventory

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	I don't care	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I feel good participating in class					
2. I like to speak English with my classmates					
3. I feel anxious by the number of the English grammar rules I need to learn					
4. I can feel my heart pounding when I get called on to read aloud to the class.					
5. I feel comfortable speaking English in the class.					
6. I get anxious when I have to write a composition in the class.					
7. I feel relaxed when I have to listen to a tape and answer comprehension questions.					
8. I get anxious when I have to listen to the directions for taking a standardized test.					
9. I get nervous when I get called on by the teacher to write something on the board.					
10. It embarrasses me when I have to volunteer in the English classroom					
11. I'm afraid to make grammar mistakes when I read aloud to a classmate.					

Appendix D
Self-Esteem Inventory

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	I don't care	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I feel confident speaking English in the classroom					
2. I do not feel confident speaking English in the classroom					
3. I think I am able to do things as well as other students					
4. I often think of myself as a failure in class					
5. I am concerned that others students will laugh at me when I speak in the classroom					
6. I think that other students communicate better than I do					
7. I am afraid to make mistakes while speaking English					
8. Confidence level affects my oral communication					
9. I feel uncomfortable when my classmates correct me while speaking up					
10. I feel ashamed when the teacher corrects me while speaking up					
11. I prefer staying quiet rather than asking the teacher a question					
12. I feel uncomfortable practicing my English outside the classroom					