NEUROLINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING: THEORY AND GUIDANCE FOR PRACTICES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRAK

NLP (Neurolinguistic Programming) adalah sebuah terapi psikologi untuk memperbaiki kepribadian dan meningkatkan pencapaian seseorang dalam kehidupan dan penghidupannya. Terapi ini telah diaplikasikan dalam berbagai bidang profesi dengan hasil yang mereka yakinkan sebagai ‘konsisten’. Aplikasi pendekatan ini dalam pendidikan sudah dilakukan di berbagai negara, sedangkan penerapannya di dalam pembelajaran bahasa asing sebagian rujukan utamanya disusun oleh Revel, J dan S. Norman (1997 dan 1999) sedangkan penelitian di bidangnya sudah cukup banyak dilakukan, meskipun pada satu sisi ditentang dan dianggap tidak relevan oleh banyak ahli pembelajaran bahasa. Dalam pembelajaran bahasa, NLP berbasis pada teori komunikasi; menempatkan kemampuan menyarikan, mengaplikasikan dan mempraktekkan prilaku efektif sebagai keterampilan belajar; mencirikan penekanan lebih pada kemampuan komunikasi lisan; bahkan ajarnya terdiri atas suatu kondisi target beserta proses untuk mewujudkannya; pembelajaran dilakukan dengan proses imajinasi dan fantasi kronologi peristiwa; dan evaluasinya bergantung pada tujuan pembelajaran yang sebelumnya telah ditetapkan oleh guru atau kurikulum.

Kata Kunci: neurolinguistic, programming dan modeling

A. Background

During the 1970s, Richard Bandler and Frank Pucelik were friends at the University of California, Santa Cruz; although none of them was students in that college. They were particularly people who wanted to make better their future due to their unpleasant past. Part of their efforts for successful life, they mastered ‘Gestalt Therapy’ simply by copying (modeling) the behavior of Pritz Perls, the founder of Gestalt Therapy. As they practiced Gestalt Therapy in the classroom, they found themselves as ‘master modeler’ due to their way in learning it.

Their activities attracted attention of John Grinder, a professor of linguistics at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Then, he immediately involved in their work. With the help of his expertise in linguistics, Grinder

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pieced out the work of Bandler and Pucelik with scientific theory by which their method (the modeling) works. Soon after that, they collaborated in creating a therapy model called ‘Meta’.

After being introduced as Neurolinguistic Programming, many people were interested in it and they began to invest in developing the work. They added new ideas into the field to develop it further and to ultimately gain what features in a person that can make amazing result in performance and achievement of life. Application of the therapy has recently widely developed on earth in many aspects of life which argued to possess ‘consistent results’. Tosey and Mathison state that NLP-based activities are found in Germany, the USA, Belgium and UK. Academic literature on NLP is sporadic across disciplines. Johnson emphasizes that NLP today is widely accepted in countries all over the world as a set of tools for producing reliable results. This methodology is part of skills for people with variety field works; from economy, politics, education, law enforcement and so on, in profession such as managers, trainers, salespersons, market researcher, counselors, consultant, TV hosts, medics, politician, lawyers, detective, and teachers and so on. A few examples are described as follows.

First, NLP as key success for everyone in extensive activities and field works. Smart presents a brief discussion about NLP strategies for excellence that he had applied successfully in his own life. The techniques are presented in an E-book entitled “Ten of the Coolest, Most Powerful and Useful NLP Techniques I’ve Ever Learned”, published through www.saladtd.co.uk. Besides, Johnson provides six NLP techniques with a quite extended explanation in E-book entitled “The Secrets to Learning Neurolinguistic Programming.” published in book@confidentfuture.com. These books present NLP techniques that can be used in communication and gaining self-excellence in many aspects of life.

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Besides, training of NLP based personality and career development also spreads extensively around the world provided by many institution and organization. It is followed by thousands of people nowadays.

Second, NLP use in law enforcement field. Smith⁶ presents NLP-based communication strategies that FBI uses in interrogation rooms. It covers: (1) Basis of social engineering and neurolinguistic programming, (2) Basic NLP practices, (3) Concept of interrogation and (4) Cop stop group practices. These skills are trained to the FBI personnel to be used in doing their law enforcement job in the USA. By the FBI Department, such training is classified ‘forbidden to outsiders’.

Third, NLP use in field of education and training. Tosey and Mathison⁷ summarize literature and researches in NLP and its implication on education and training. They identify the concerning issues, theory, methodology and challenges on NLP in the field. Kammer et. al. present a number of research in NLP in relation education of different kinds and levels. The topic coverage includes creativity and self-expression; e-learning; emotional, social, behavioral and learning difficulties; English as foreign language; further and higher education; language and learning; leadership and management in education and in general; meta programs in the classrooms; modeling, parents education and so on. They show implication and proof of NLP principles in education and training.

And fourth, NLP use in language teaching. An extensive discussion and implication of NLP in language teaching methodology had been publicized by Revel J. and S. Norman⁸ and⁹. In the first book they discuss pedagogical bases of NLP to be applied in language teaching or other fields. Then, in the second book they present a number of activities for developing language under NLP pedagogy.

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⁶ Smith, Brad. “How the FBI Uses NLP on You” (Retrieved from Endhack.com on Thursday, February 27, 2014, 2:40:46 PM)
Many researches had also been conducted concerning application NLP in language teaching, such as Targutay\textsuperscript{10} and Harris\textsuperscript{11}.

**B. Discussion**

Lexically neurolinguistic programming consists of three componential terms: neuron, language and program in which each of them does not posses physical definition other than just descriptive terminology. Stacey\textsuperscript{12} presents the concept of the three terms, described as follows:

- **Neuro** refers to neurology, our nervous system-the mental pathways, our five senses take which allows us to see, hear, feel, taste and smell. However, one will not get any physical explanation of the processes in learning NLP.

- **Linguistic** refers to our language ability; how we put together words and phrases to express ourselves, as well as how our “silent language” of movement and gestures reveals our states, thinking styles and more. It concerns with verbal and non-verbal feature of communication, but one will not get teaching of language components inside.

- **Programming**, taken from computer science, refers to the idea that thoughts, feelings and actions are like computer software programs. When we change those mind programs, just like when we change in or upgrade computer software, we immediately get positive changes in our performance. We get immediate difference in how we think, feel, act and live from the previous to the current. So, programming refers to effort to change or upgrade one’s mind and way of thinking in order to get change or upgrade in life.

NLP is basically a set of physical and psychological features required to be to be successful in any field of life. It is a way of thinking about ideas and people that allows you to excel in any field…NLP is often called ‘the art and science of


\textsuperscript{11} Harris, T. \textit{NLP if it works use it . . .}, CAUCE, Revista de Filología Didáctica, 2001, 24: 29-38.

\textsuperscript{12} Stacey, Winch. \textit{From Frustation to Satisfaction: Using NLP to Improve Self-Expression}. In EA Education Conference, 2005., p. 35.
personal excellence\textsuperscript{13}; a system of techniques therapist could use in building rapport with clients, gathering information about their internal and external views of the world, and helping them achieve goals and bring about their personal change (Richards and Rodgers)\textsuperscript{14}; a set of beliefs, attitudes and skills that enable people to achieve more than they could previously conceive (Sucheka)\textsuperscript{15}. In short, NLP prepares ideas, techniques, believes, attitudes and skills for everybody to be used in order to get success in their own life.

As presented in the background above NLP is initially a therapy system called ‘Meta’ which interested many scientists after being introduced Neurolinguistic Programming. In the next turn, the groups of scientists who added new ideas into NLP made it becomes more theoretically completed, understandable and developed to into many kinds of programs, models and applications.

NLP is applied in a number of programs provisioned with series of step by step procedure which is the theoretical mix among neurological process, language and strategies to get excellence in communication, job and personality. Dilts (1980, in Tosey and Mathison) states that NLP reflects that a person is a whole mind-body system, with consistent, patterned connections between neurological process (‘neuro’), language (‘linguistic’) and learned behavioral strategies (‘programming’)\textsuperscript{16}. Besides, Richards and Rodgers state that Grinder and Bandler sought to fill what they perceived to be a gap in psychological thinking and practice of early 1970s by developing a series of step by step procedure that would enable people to improve themselves\textsuperscript{17}. Additionally, Stevenson points out that NLP is how we use the basic language of our mind to consistently achieve the results we want in life\textsuperscript{18}. In conclusion, as applied in variety fields of life, NLP is developed in a number of programs which consist of strategic issues by which somebody can develop his personality and performance based on their needs.

Relevance of NLP in general education and language teaching cannot be denied. It covers the following aspects: firstly, all classroom instruction in education is perceived as a kind of communication either it is to be one direction or two directions. As matter of fact, NLP concerns with strategies for successful communication which of course can be perceived particularly as strategies for successful instruction. Accordingly, mastering NLP is useful for teachers of all majors. Secondly, successful instruction also has something to do with classroom management: building rapport, gathering interest, guiding mind and thought, eliciting activeness and motivation, and so on. These aspects are key success for classroom management which is extensively provisioned in NLP. In extense, Antic characterizes an NLP approach to teaching and learning as follows:

- The teacher-learner relationship is a cybernetic loop, a dynamic process in which meaning is constructed through reciprocal feedback; not a transmission of information from one individual to another, separate, individual.
- People act according to the way they understand and represent the world, not according to the way the world 'is' (i.e. 'the map is not the territory').
- Of prime interest in NLP are the ways in which people represent the world internally, through sensory imagery (principally visual, auditory and kinesthetic) and language. NLP is particularly interested in the way internal representations are structured, both in themselves (e.g. the location, size, brightness etc. of visual imagery), and dynamically (e.g. as sequences). NLP assumes that the structure of internal representation shows regularities for, and is unique to, each individual.
- NLP also assumes that there are systematic relationships between this structuring and that individual's language and behavior. A learner's internal representations and processing are reflected, in various ways, in their language- and their external behavior (e.g. non-verbal behavior). (NLP courses train participants to observe and utilize these aspects).
- Skills, beliefs and behaviors are all learnt (e.g. skills have corresponding sequences of internal representation, often referred to as 'strategies'). Learning
is a process through which such representations and sequences are acquired and modified.

- An individual's capacity to learn is influenced strongly by their neuro-physiological 'state' (e.g. a state of curiosity rather than a state of boredom), and by their beliefs about learning and about themselves as learners (rather obviously, beliefs that one is capable of learning and that learning is worthwhile and fun are considered more useful than their opposites). Such states and beliefs are also learnt and susceptible to change.

- Such modification happens through communication between teacher and learner, which takes place through verbal and non-verbal channels, both consciously and unconsciously. The functioning of which human beings are conscious, and which can be controlled, represents only a small proportion of total functioning.

- All communication potentially influences learning. Crucially, teachers' language and behavior influence learners on at least two levels simultaneously; both their understanding of the topic in question (e.g. the dynamic structure of their internal representations), and their beliefs about the world, including about learning.

- It follows that awareness of choice about one's own language patterns and behavior as a teacher, and sensitivity to and curiosity about their influence on and interaction with learner's internal representations, are crucial to effective teaching and learning.

Second, language teaching in particular possesses a more specific relevance with NLP. That NLP teaches strategies for successful communication is a further relevance since the goal of language teaching in the current pedagogy is to achieve ability in communication. The following will discuss the methodological aspects of features of NLP in language teaching.

a. Language Theory

NLP does not concern with any theory of language rather than theory of communication. Communication is argued to consist of verbal and nonverbal features to manipulate for one’s success. Verbal behavior refers to
wordings that we use to express ideas or messages to people. Nonverbal behavior consists of physical, mimic, and gestures features that will help the message perception in part of hearer or audience.

b. Learning theory

Learning in NLP is not perceived as learning content of the material but learning and performing successful conducts of successful person in the concerning field. Having been successful in abstracting the successful conducts, the next process of learning is performing the conducts in the learner’s own life. Learning content and skill in the field is considered to be copying the conducts of the successful person whom is being modeled. For example: Bandler and Pucelik learned the behaviors of Pritz Perls, the originator of Gestalt Therapy. After that they abstracted the behaviors to certain key points which is called model of Pritz Perls. Therefore, they perform the modeled behavior in their own life. Then, that they were successful in Gestalt Therapy was the result of performing Pritz Pearls’ behavior rather than learning the therapy. In the next turn, Bandler and Pucelik can teach people how to be successful in Gestalt Therapy like what they had done. In short, there are two learning theory in NLP: (1) learning effective behavior as learning skill and (2) successful behavior is teachable. They are explained as follows:

1. Learning effective behaviors is perceived as a learning skill, by which one will acquire knowledge, skill, beliefs, emotion, experience and values that will bring him or her to excellence. O’Connor and McDermott (1996, in Richards and Rodgers) assert that learning effective behaviors is viewed as a problem of skill learning: it is dependent on moving stages of controlled to automatic processing. O’Connor and McDermott (1996, in Richards and Rodgers) Modeling as skill means finding out about it, and the beliefs and values that enable them to do it. You can also model emotions, experiences, beliefs and

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values…Modeling successful performance leads to excellence. Just as Bandler and Grinder modeled NLP on the practices of successful therapist, so teachers are expected to model their teaching on expert teacher they most admire. Similarly, learners are expected to find successful models for that person they themselves are striving to become. Richards and Rodgers state that if we change the way we speak and think about things, we can change our behavior. In short, learning in NLP means identifying effective behaviors of successful conducts in any field of life, and then learner will conduct it to achieve their success.

2. Successful behavior can be learned, done and taught to other people to acquire similar result, even though in the practice there will be variety among individuals. According to Bandler and Grinder (1975, in Pisghadam) if people are able to understand how others can do something successfully, they can copy that action or process completely and successfully and then teach it to other people. O’Conner and Seymour introduced NLP as a model in which every individual builds his or her own unique experience of life, thoughts, and communication. According to them, NLP is “the art and science of personal excellence”. Johnson NLP is a way of thinking about ideas and people that allows you to excel in any field. The basic premise is that what we can study people who are getting great results and reduce their behaviors down to a model or the bare minimum required which enables them to consistently get their results. In short they believe that strategies for success are learnable, conductible and teachable.

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20 Bandler, Loc. Cit.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Pisghadam, Reza., et.al. “NLP and its Relationship with Teacher Success, Gender, Teaching Experience, and Degree: A Comparative Study”. p. 3 World Journal of English Language Vol. 1, No. 2; October 2011
c. Principles

Learning process in NLP-based education or language teaching lessons derived from strategies by which someone can get success specifically in communication and generally in developing his or her own personality and life achievement. Revel and Norman, in Richards and Rodgers, list 4 principles of NLP that can be explained as follows:

1. **Outcomes**: know what you want! Everyone knows precisely what they want will help them achieve it. In the practice of language teaching and education in general, this principle concerns with making students build clear idea about what they are going to learn in long term and short term.

2. **Rapport**: establish rapport with yourself, then with others! For effective communication, people need to maximize similarities and to minimize differences among them at a non-conscious level. Rapport is the feel of comfortable and harmonious inside oneself and with his or her league. It concerns with creating these feelings in the classroom in term of teacher-students and students-students, which they argued as effort to maximize similarities and minimize difference among people (teacher and students) both physically and psychologically.

3. **Sensory acuity**: Use your senses, look at, listen to, and feel what is actually happening. One should notice what another person is communicating, consciously and nonverbally. It refers to effort to give maximum attention to students both on what they are saying verbally and what their physical states are saying. It is believed that change in one’s body indicates change in his mind. Johnson lists concerning key parts of physiology as follows:
   - Skin color (whether it is lighter or darker)
   - Skin tonus (whether the tone of muscles is symmetrical or not symmetrical)
   - Breathing speed (whether breathing is faster or slower)
   - Breathing location (whether they’re breathing from higher or lower in their chest)
   - Lower lip size (whether it has more lines or less lines)
   - Eye focus (whether their eyes are more focused or defocused)
   - Pupil dilation (whether their pupils are more dilated or undilated)  

A teacher’s sensitivity on the change in part of students will make him easier to understand what is happening and to perform certain response conducts.

4. **Flexibility**: Keep changing what you do until you get what you want. Doing things differently if what you are doing is not working: having a range of skills to do something else or something different. It is believed that every individual is unique in sense of physical and psychological

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aspects. One will do different things to get a certain targeted result which is different from others due to differences among themselves. Certain strategies will effectively works to someone but less effective for others. One is suggested to change their conducts if they are still unable to obtain their targets by doing what they usually do.

d. Focus in language skills

There is no statement about certain language skill emphasized in NLP, however the advocates of NLP argued that NLP-Based language skill development can be made based on students’ needs of instruction. It is more dependent on teacher’s understanding about NLP and the nature of language skills targeted to obtain. Above all, from the practices and examples provided in the publications it is seen that NLP concerns more on oral production of language (listening and speaking).

e. Material development

NLP principles can be applied to the teaching of all aspects of language. Activity begins with a specific targeted condition (e.g. future statement or past perfect statements) provisioned with physical and psychological behaviors by which someone can bring about the condition. The may consists of the following components:

- Targeted condition/purpose to be processed in the end of communication activity, for example ‘I Have Eaten a Biscuit’
- Relevant vocabulary by which processes from preceding, processing, and ending of the targeted condition can be logically organized
- Suggestion to have students be calm and relax in which they can be engrossed in imagining being in the events for achieving the targeted condition
- Suggestion for processing the events in which teacher inserts the vocabulary in chronological order and have the students express relevant expressions
- Questions for exploring what the students feel being in the events
- A large piece of paper on which the teacher put the targeted condition in large words, for students to write down their feeling under it, and
Order for students to compare their feeling being in the process of the current lesson with the previous lessons.

f. Techniques and procedures

Like what is presented in learning theory and emphasized in the principles, a lesson in NLP begins with description of a definite purpose: ‘Know what you want!’ After that the lesson followed by identification of key words of behaviors. Finally, process the experience in the classroom. As an analogical illustration let’s see the following experience of Richards Bandler and Frank Pucelik in learning Gestalt Therapy: ‘Firstly, Bandler and Pucelik set their purpose as ‘To Master Gestalt Therapy’. Then, in the process they subtracted key points as model for Pritz Perls. Finally, they perform Pritz Perls behavior in their own life by which they master Gestalt Therapy.’ This learning model is to imitate as suggested by Richards and Rodgers: “Just as Bandler and Grinder modeled NLP on the practices of successful therapist, so teachers are expected to model their teaching on expert teacher they most admire. Similarly, learners are expected to find successful models for that person they themselves are striving to become.”

In applying it in language teaching, Revel and Norman in Richards and Rodgers exemplify a purpose of an NLP lesson in language teaching as ‘To Obtain the Feeling of Having Eaten a Biscuit’. The classroom activity is described as follows:

1. Students are told that they are going on an "inner grammatical experience as you eat a biscuit."
2. Check that they understand vocabulary of the experience (smell, taste, chew, swallow, bite, lick, etc.)
3. Students are asked to relax, close their eyes, and "go inside." Once inside," they listen to the teacher-produced fantasy, which is given is the following:
4. (An abbreviated version of the teacher text) "Imagine a biscuit. A delicious biscuit. The sort you really like. Pick it up and look at it closely. Notice how crisp and fresh it is. Smell it. Notice how your mouth is beginning to water. In a moment you are going to eat the biscuit. Say the words to yourself: 'I am going to eat this biscuit.' "Slowly chew the biscuit and notice how delicious it tastes on your tongue and in your mouth. . . . Say

the words to yourself, 'I'm really enjoying eating this biscuit.' "Take another bite. Chew it. Taste it. Enjoy it. . . . And then swallow. Lick your lips, move your tongue all around the inside of your mouth to catch any last bits of biscuit, and swallow them. "Notice how you feel now. Notice the taste in your mouth. Notice how your stomach feels with a biscuit inside it. Notice how you feel emotionally. You have eaten a biscuit. Say the words to yourself, 'I've eaten a biscuit.' "How are you feeling now? Think of the words to describe you are feeling now. Take a deep breath and gently come back to room, bringing the feeling with you. Open your eyes."

5. Ask the students to describe how they are feeling now — "the feeling of the present perfect." Listen for any statements that link the raw experience of eating the biscuit with their present feelings (e.g. feel full," "I'm not hungry anymore," "I've got a nice taste in mouth," "I feel fat").

6. Ask them to say again the sentence that describes the cause of way they feel ("I've eaten a biscuit").

7. Put a large piece of paper on the wall with the words "I've eaten a biscuit" at the top. Have students write how they feel underneath.

8. On other pieces of paper, write sentences such as: I've painted a picture. I've had a row with my boy/girlfriend. I've finished my homework. I've cleaned my teeth.

9. Ask students to stand in front of each sentence, close their eyes, and strongly imagine what they have done in order to be saying that sentence now.

10. Students write on the paper how they feel now about these sentences.

11. Leave the papers on the wall as a reminder of the feeling link to the grammatical structure.

12. As follow-up, contrast the feeling of the present perfect with the feeling of the simple past. Ask students to remember the things they did in the last lesson ("I ate a biscuit"). Ask them to close their eyes and notice how they are feeling now. Contrast this feeling with the feeling they remember from the last lesson and which they wrote down on the papers.

13. Ask them to say the sentence "Yesterday, I ate a biscuit."

14. Discuss the comparison between the feelings ("I remember the taste, but I can't actually taste it").

15. You can do similar exercises to exemplify other tenses using different tastes and sensory experiences.29

From example above, we can see that NLP language teaching activity begins with creating comfortable atmosphere to enhance students’ thought and imagination. Within this condition, students are exposed to process their thought and fantasy, then physically utter the language comprises the

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29 Richards, Op Cit., p. 129-130.
chronological events from beginning to the end stage of establishing the targeted ending condition. The summary is as follows:

1. Establish the purpose of the lesson on part of the students.
2. Present relevant vocabulary use in processing the imaginary experience.
3. Suggest students to be calm and relax in which they can be engrossed in imagining being in the events for achieving the targeted condition.
4. Expose students to feel being in the process of making happen the established purpose step by step by employing and making students use the relevant vocabularies in chronological order.
5. Ask students about what they feel while being in the events.
6. Putting a large piece of paper on which the teacher put the ending condition in large words, for students to write down their feeling below, and
7. Ask the students to compare their feeling being in the process of the current lesson with the previous lessons.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be closely related to what the teacher previously decided and processed in the classroom. It may be different in term of language, skill, conducts and so on. Since NLP is not a language teaching method other than one that can be applied for teaching language, the evaluation will extensively dependent on nature of language and language skills that are targeted to achieve.

C. Conclusion

NLP is not simply a language teaching method, but a holistic approach to intellectual and psychological potentials. NLP practitioners believe that if language teachers adopt and use the principles of NLP, they will become more effective teachers. In language teaching, the appeal of NLP to some teachers stems from the fact that it offers a set of humanistic principles that provide either a new justification for well-known techniques from the communicative or humanistic repertoire or a different interpretation of the role of the teacher and the learner, one in harmony with many learner-centered, person-centered views.
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