

Students Motivation: The Space of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) in the Second Language Classroom

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Abstract

This research paper focusses upon the space of Neuro-Linguistic Programming in the students' motivation of the second language classroom. Motivation plays a crucial role in learning. Brown defines motivation as an inner drive, impulse, emotion or desire that moves one towards a particular action (Brown 1994). Second language acquisition turns out to be easier when the learner has got a strong inner drive or impulse to learn it (Dornyei, Z 2001). NLP, founded by John Grinder and Richard Bandler in the 1970s, brought out many types of patterns of human behaviors which could be manipulated for outstanding results in the entire faculties of human lives. It says that devising proper techniques of NLP, Students motivation could be accelerated. Of late, there is an increasing demand for NLP techniques and approaches in education and business domains. According to Mathison, Neuro-Linguistic Programming can be made use of to enhance motivation. It claims to help achieve excellence of performance in language teaching and learning, improve classroom communication, optimize learner attitudes and motivation, raise self-esteem, facilitate personal growth among students, and even change their attitude to life (Thornbury, 2001). NLP uses techniques like Swish Technique, Rapport, Modeling, Outcome, Reframing, Anchoring etc to boost up motivation among learners so that the students get a new enthusiasm and purpose in the language classroom which ultimately helps them achieve their learning objectives quite faster.

This paper is the outcome of the research which was conducted among the EMEA College UG students of Kerala, India employing NLP techniques along with their text. Questionnaire-based pre-test and post-test analysis have been made to find out the results of the experiment. The study confirms that NLP techniques could be employed for enhancing motivation among second language learners of English.

Keywords

Motivation, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Rapport, Swish Technique, Well-formed Outcome

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Introduction

Teachers of English often complain about the least interested students in the second language classrooms. Students' motivation inside the second language classroom involves a number of psycho-sociological and linguistic factors (Dornyei, Z. 2001 & 2010). In the classroom, motivation means the readiness to learn. It is also an inner desire of the learner for the best results and involves the factors that contribute to the process of learning. Motivation is a frequent variable in the ELT research domain that always makes concerns and challenges over the practitioners in the language classrooms (Cheng & Dornyei, 2007; Scheidecker & Freeman 1999). A number of studies over the past couple of decades have analyzed patterns of motivation in language classrooms with diversified situations (e. g. Cheng & Dornyei 2007, Gardner & Smythe, 1982; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Researchers over the years have tried to test different techniques to improve students' motivation. Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) can be used to improve students' motivation.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

Neuro-linguistic programming is developed at the University of California at Santa Cruz in the 1970s. Its founders and principal authors are Richard Bandler and John Grinder. It has been well established in humanistic psychology since 1971. NLP is widely used in every field of human excellence and it can be used in language teaching as it claims to help achieve excellence in learner performance and psychological issues of students. NLP avows to be helpful in achieving excellence and success in life. Richard Bandler and John Grinder assert that NLP is helpful with a wide range of issues from phobias and bad habits to depression, psychosomatic problems and learning disorders. NLP can improve and unlock communication and language skills which can make a huge difference to the classroom environment. NLP can help teachers deal with challenging behaviour from students and relieve any difficult classroom situations they may face. It helps improve classroom communication, optimize learner attitudes and motivation, raise self-esteem, facilitate personal growth in students, and even change their attitude to life (Thornbury, 2001). It can be used as one of the resources to enhance effectiveness of language instruction (Hardingham, 1998). Neuro-Linguistic Programming is often associated with exploring individual differences and styles in learners, acceleration of learning, training of sensory systems, emotional memory, multiple intelligence, brain-based activities, hypnotic induction, counselling, etc. NLP is presented as a very broad area comprising various means to make learning more effective, involving, and learner-friendly (Revell and Norman, 1999). However, NLP in connection with classroom discourse still remains understudied. Teacher-learner interaction produces a 'therapeutic effect' of improved learner self-esteem, better involvement in classroom procedures, greater motivation, the lowering affective filters of learners', and an increasing sensitivity to knowledge (Thornbury, 2001). NLP in education offers some techniques such as to establish a rapport between the teacher and learner, modelling the learner, pacing with the learner, leading the learner with cognitive challenges, elicitation with learner for an output, calibration of the learner to understand the individual differences, re-framing the approach with alternatives etc. Thus NLP provides many strategies that can also be used to motivate learners for lowering affective filters of learners in ELT, but little research has been done in NLP with respect to ELT classroom in lowering affective filters of learners at different settings. This research paper would like to bridge this gap.

NLP has its roots in brain science and neurology, which is about the way the cerebrum works and how the mind can be prepared with the end goal of improvement. It is identified with 'left/right mind capacities, 'visual/sound-related/kinaesthetic' learning styles, different insight and different zones of exploration which are endeavoring to distinguish

methods of learning whilst perceiving the significance of the individual learner. NLP builds up an understanding of considerations and behaviour and to show individuals their abilities to empower them to be more in control of their own musings, emotions, and activities and to roll out positive improvements throughout their life.

Recent interest in Neuro-linguistic programming or NLP (Hardingham, 1998) has been as one of the resources to enhance effectiveness in classroom instruction. It has been well established in the framework of humanistic psychology since 1971. NLP claims to help achieve excellence of performance in language teaching and learning, improve classroom communication, optimize learner attitudes and motivation, raise self-esteem, facilitate personal growth in students, and even change their attitude to life (Thornbury, 2001: 394). NLP can be used as a methodology for imbibing various aspects of curriculum faster (Craft, 2001).

Richard Bandler and John Grinder guarantee that NLP can help with an extensive variety of issues from fears and negative behavior patterns to misery, psychosomatic issues, and learning issues. NLP can offer educators some assistance in dealing with any troublesome classroom circumstances they might confront. Attempting to manage uncontrollable negative behaviours can take up a valuable time and not just harm the teaching and learning, additionally disturbs the entire classroom environment for all the students. NLP can help instructors by helping them to distinguish the best learning styles for their students and seeing how to apply these in the most ideal way. The subtlest of changes in the utilization of specific words, expression, and manner of speaking can immeasurably change the result. NLP likewise perceives the significance of non-verbal correspondence, especially eye contact, stance, breathing, and development.

A Glimpse into NLP Principles

1. The meaning of the communication is nothing but the response it elicits or brings about.
2. Conscious and unconscious are two levels of Communication
3. People with the most flexibility have the best chances of achieving the response they desire.
4. The more options we have, the greater our chances of success.
5. If you keep doing what you have always done, you will always get what you have always gotten.
6. If you know exactly what you want, it is easier to get it.
7. We cannot change others, we can only change ourselves.
8. Rapport means meeting someone in their model of the world.
9. The map is not the territory.

Representational System

NLP has termed our sensory channels as "representational" systems alluding to the way people 're-present' or understand our outside surroundings. Since people are exposed to a lot of information, everybody has invented their own 'filters'. Such filters are grouped into Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (VAK) channels. In grown-ups, the kinesthetic channel is

subdivided into a motoric or an emotional preference. When people are relaxed and calm, they are tangible use any one the channels. But when under stressed and strained people have a tendency to depend on the most comfortable filter (s). It is very much interesting to identify the data seem in one channel, store it as a memory utilizing another channel and being expressed it through a third one. By meticulously analysing, how individuals talk and act, it is very easy to identify one's predominant frame. In education setting, item powers the students to channelize their learning activities effectively.

The VAK System of NLP

Listening to the language a person uses could help to categorize to which representational systems that person belongs to. Visual individuals tend to utilize expressions, for example, "Is it clear?" or "Do you understand?" Auditory individuals make use, "Does that sound OK?" or "I hear what you are stating. " Kinesthetic individuals tend to utilize activity or feeling words, for example "It simply doesn't feel right. " Once one could look into one's own language patterns along with the listening of others, it would be easier to identify ones sensory group. It has extreme importance in Education system. When it comes to the application of NLP in classrooms to deal with motivation, VAK system plays a crucial role. The language pattern used by the student sheds light upon the representation system of the students. It is said that the learning style of a students has deeper impact upon his preferred sensory system to learn. Most of the students get demotivated in the classrooms because teachers employ only one strategy forgetting the heterogeneous mixture of classroom students' nature. An expert NLP practitioner can easily unwind complex behavioural problems of students within a few hours.

Review of Literature

A number of studies conducted in the field of ESL learning show that motivation is crucial to successful ESL learning (Andres, 2003). Within a school system, the amount of motivation that children bring into the classroom with them is highly variable. It depends both on age and on family background factors. In-school factors also influence motivation. Crookes and Schmidt (1991) argued that intrinsic motivation, the one that stems from the interest in the activity itself independent from extrinsic reward, should be favored in the classroom. According to them, teachers can foster intrinsic motivation by posing reasonable challenging tasks to students, basing them on the perceptions of learner's needs and providing for plenty of variety in classroom activities.

A study conducted in Russia among EFL (English as foreign language) teachers employing NLP techniques concluded NLP techniques as establishing a rapport with students, calibrating, keeping pace with, and leading the learner, re-framing classroom procedures, as well as anchoring success, were enabling the learners, generating more chances, and helping with programming success. Excessive focus on eliciting output, the continuous filtering of correct and incorrect knowledge, and the modeling of learner strategies in the top down way were found to be associated with less teacher-learner congruence, and fewer chances for successful teacher-learner interaction (Radislav Millrood 2004). Apart from that, the personality and its attributes have immense influence upon the motivation of the students (Bhardwaj, 2009). A branch of approach like NLP that deals with personality attributes along with various techniques can improve the motivation of students. Though there are many positive advancement for NLP among its practitioners but a group of main stream psychologists are a bit of skeptical of its effectiveness on account of its eclectic nature (Gumm & Walker, 1992).

Jane Mathison in her doctoral study in 2003, at the University of Surrey, England, confirms that NLP can be used to offer solutions to problems encountered in teaching, for

example, to do with classroom management. In a paper, “Neuro-linguistic programming: its potential for learning and teaching in formal education” presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, University of Surrey, September, 2003 by Jane Mathison with Paul Tosey, says ‘an individual’s capacity to learn is influenced strongly by their neuro-physiological state (a state of curiosity rather than a state of boredom), and by their beliefs about learning and about themselves as learners. Such states and beliefs are also learnt and susceptible to change’. NLP has immense potential in the classroom, especially in language classroom and according to study by Mathison and Tosey P ‘awareness of choice about one’s own language patterns and behavior as teacher, and sensitivity to and curiosity about their influence on and interaction with learner’s internal representations, are crucial to effective teaching and learning’ underlines the importance of the language used in the classroom on which NLP can work effectively to bring about positive results. Neuro Linguistic Programming can be worked out to enhance classroom communication and in creating lowering affective filters. But a rigorous study needed to understand the space of NLP in ELT, especially in Indian contexts.

Methodology

A qualitative cum quantitative research has been carried out among the two classes of BA English (42 students) and BA Economics (63 students) of EMEA College of Arts and Science of Calicut University, Kerala, India from December 2016 up to July 2017. 100 students of both classes became the part of the study. A pre-test questionnaire of 20 questions has been prepared to know their present mastery over English with a focus upon communicative English. A semi structured interview with 4 questions were also conducted to identify students’ problem with Motivation. This questionnaire which has been supplied to all students. 100 questionnaires filled up and received back. The scores were recorded that showed their command over English. And with a semi structured interview, they are identified with the problems of anxiety, confidence, and self-esteem etc. Now, with the discussion of NLP experts, a few tools were selected to apply upon a group of students. The students of BA English and Economics were taken as Control group and Experimental group respectively. The control group, BA English students were taught normally, while BA Economics students were given techniques of NLP to deal with their motivation. The post-test questionnaire focused 20 questions and a semi structured interview comprising of four questions. It was astounding to note that the second group 98 percentage could perform better than before. At the same time, control group could improve only 2 percentages than the previous one. This paper elaborates the effect of NLP on the motivation of second language learners at college level and it gives at length about the techniques of NLP used to make big result among the second language learners of English at EMEA College of Calicut University.

Nature of Subjects

EMEA College of Arts and Science is a College is situated at Kumminiparamba in Kondotti, 6 KMs away from Calicut University, 2 KMs from Calicut International Airport, 18 KMs from Feroke Railway Station, and 32 KMs from Calicut City; with a congenial atmosphere for academic pursuits. Most of the students hail from poor backgrounds and hence there is no special liking for a subject like English in the college. Most of the students are detached and seemingly not interested in English classroom. Two Classes, namely Third semester BA English and Third Semester BA Economics students are taken for this study. They belong to 18-20 age group.

Primary Questionnaire

A questionnaire of 20 questions has been prepared to know their present English competence. All twenty questions carried one mark each. All these questions were not related what they study during the semester but general easy English questions such as English phrases used in different situations and all of them carried options. Comprehension, Vocabulary and simple grammatical structures were also included.

Semi Structured Interview

This was included in the research to get an idea of students' reasons for motivation. It had a question to talk about any topic in English for two minutes. Semi-structured interview focused five questions such as if they like English or not with reasons. Another question was to know their objective of studying English. It interrogated their attitude towards learning foreign language too. It ended with a friendly question to present a two minute presentation upon any topic they like the most.

Analysis and Discussion of the Study

Percentage analysis tool is employed in this study. The pre-test marks of the students are given below class wise.

Table I. Pre-test BA English Questionnaire Marks

Total Questions	Maximum Marks	Total Number of Students	Total Marks	Class Average
20	20	40	441	11

Table II. Pre-test BA Economics Questionnaire Marks

Total Questions	Maximum Marks	Total Number of Students	Total Marks	Class Average
20	20	60	576	9.6

From the pre-test, BA English class average score was 11, while BA Economics students were 9.6. BA English has a bit higher score since they are studying English core subjects.

The semi structured-interview with two minute presentation was a tedious task during pre-test and post-test research. The time for two minute presentation has been recorded class wise. At the same time, through semi structured interview following things were identified which helped to take adequate NLP tools for the research. Most of them did not like English because they perceive English as tough and not easy to master. They had very negative attitude towards English, that even they get graduated they were not sure if they could communicate better in English. It was shocking that they were least known about the outcome or objective of the lessons they study right now. It is understood that 80 percentage does not like English and their teacher. All of them said that if classes were cancelled they were happy. Only 30% liked coming college and that too was for fun for meeting friends. All of them said about that they worry give presentations and talk in English. Nervousness, anxiety were their main problems. Many students spotted with anxiety too. And almost all students irrespective of the two classes were fear of making mistakes so that they don't like to speak in English inside and outside the classroom.

Following is the table that shows the average time they took for two minute presentation of the topic they liked the most. During the presentation some sweat, some stopped in between, some even could not start, some stopped crying and some simply sat keeping mum over there.

Table III. Two minute Presentation

Class	Total Number of Students	Average of time used for 2 min presentation	Perc. Of students who used 2 minutes completely	Perc. Of students who could not used 2 minutes
BA English	40	1. 4 minutes	25%	75%
BA Economics	60	1. 02 minutes	20%	80%

NLP Intervention

Once the pretest and semi structured interview were finished, BA English students made into a control group while BA Economics were selected as experimental group. The major research problem was if the NLP techniques have any impact upon students' motivation issues. As a next step, pre-test findings are discussed with NLP Experts and with their assistance a few NLP techniques were identified.

NLP Techniques Used

1) Rapport

Interaction in the classroom refers to the conversation between teachers and students, as well as among the students, in which active participation and learning of the students becomes vital. Conversations are part of the sociocultural activities through which students construct knowledge collaboratively. Teacher-learner interaction produces a 'therapeutic effect' of improved learner self-esteem, better involvement in classroom procedures, greater motivation, the lowering of learners' individual defenses, and an increasing sensitivity to knowledge (Thornbury 2001; O'Connor and Seymour, 1993). NLP offers some techniques like establishing a rapport between the teacher and learner/s (building an interpersonal contact with the learner through support, interaction, and empathy). Modelling the learner (offering strategies for the learners to achieve better results). Creating a learner filter (monitoring 'correct'/'incorrect' knowledge or behaviour), pacing with the learner (achieving harmony of teaching and learning in rate, style, and production), leading the learner (introducing a cognitive challenge for the learner), elicitation with learner (guiding the learner to an output), calibration of the learner (recognizing individual differences in learners), re-framing the approach (stopping unproductive teaching strategies, and providing better alternatives so as to improve learning opportunities), collapsing an anchor (reinforcing learner achievement by emphasizing success). Thus NLP can also be used to enhance interactions. Rapport is the best technique of NLP to enhance interactions.

NLP rapport is established and maintained by pacing. By definition, this is the process of moving as the other person moves. Pacing or matching accepts the other person's behavior and meets them in their model of the world. It is about reducing the differences between yourself and others at an unconscious level. Successful pacing is at an unconscious level. When rapport is established, you can influence the other person's behavior. Rapport can be established by

a) Body postures

Rapport can be gained using whole body, half body or part of your body to match the other. Matching typical poses that the other person offers with their head and shoulders is useful. If the body posture is unusual, however, matching can seem disrespectful. Intelligent execution is important.

b) Breathing

You can match the rate of a person's breathing, where they are breathing (chest, abdomen or stomach) or how deep.

c) Voice

Matching the pace, volume, pitch, tone, and type of words is a little tricky to learn but worth it to have a great rapport. No need have to try to match all these aspects. Choose one. If a person is talking slowly, slow down. If they speak softly, drop volume.

d) Beliefs and values

Authentically trying to understand another person's beliefs and values without judgment can create very deep rapport.

e) Language patterns

Matching language patterns is a favorite NLP rapport. By using the same words to describe things and processes, the person feels understood. Attaching particular words to corresponding experiences. Matching representational systems can be very powerful. Matching and mirroring a person's representation system along with their eye accessing cues can help build rapport by speaking the same "language".

2) Swish Technique

This is a popular method used in NLP. This NLP technique involves re-associating a negative thought with a positive thought. Counsel the student to know what triggers it. Common anxiety triggers represent an image of oneself in their mind that is negative. This negative anxiety self-image needs to be replaced with a positive self-image. NLP teaches to choose a self-image that is exciting but realistic and then to make it as bold and colourful in your mind as possible. Visualise the new image doing the activity that had caused anxiety against the old image of yourself. This strong representation of one's new self-image doing the activity should grow until it completely obscures the old one. Any triggers that caused to be anxious will fade with the negative self-image. BA Economics students were counseled to know their image and in each class followed a Swish technique is applied after identifying their personal problems.

3) Well-formed Outcome

A very important technique in NLP to create intrinsic motivation in the work/task a person does. Following criteria are followed such as making statements of goals in a) future perfect tense to state the a) Discard using negatives in the goal statement c) making a sense of genuine expectancy and anticipation c) making a realization looking into the goal whether it could be achieved by the person himself and need assistance to get it done d) Identify When, Where, Who needed in the process e) Chunking the goal into manageable the steps adequately that should be evaluated and measured f) blending and mixing the sensory-based evidence into the outcome such as what will be seen, heard and felt, and the

type of action and behaviour are made when the major milestones toward the outcome are realized g) Make the goal compelling digging deep into the excitement on achieved outcome, seeking the obstacles and distractions on attentions in the way to achieving it, and finally h) checking the ecology that asking if achieving the outcome congruent with one's own beliefs and values, If not, go inside to find out how the outcome can become more ecological.

Post-test Results

Table IV. Post-test BA English Questionnaire Marks

Total Questions	Maximum Marks	Total Number of Students	Total Marks	Class Average
20	20	40	484	12. 1

Table V . Post-Test BA Economics Questionnaire Marks

Total Questions	Maximum Marks	Total Number of Students	Total Marks	Class Average
20	20	60	753	12. 5

There is a very significant increase in the average of post-test score of the 20 general questions among the experimental group, BA economics students, that they have increased their class average from 9. 6 to 12. 5. The real change saw in the semi-structured interview and presentation.

Table VI Post-test Two minute Presentation

Class	Total Number of Students	Average of time used for 2 min presentation	Perc. Of students who used 2 minutes completely	Perc. Of students who could not used 2 minutes
BA English	40	1. 6 minutes	30%	70%
BA Economics	60	1. 9 minutes	73%	80%

Analysing the table VI, the intervention of NLP among the students of experimental group, BA Economics, seems to be very relevant since the average of two minute presentation has shot up from 1. 02 minutes to 1. 9 minutes. In the semi structured interview during post experiment, BA Economics students seemed very energetic and enthusiastic. Most of the expressed that their outlook has been changed and now they know what must be focused in the classroom. One of the notable changes was that the BA Economics students did not have any apprehension to speak in English when they were requested to make two minutes presentation. A paradigmatic shift in the interactions of students with teachers were also noticed.

Conclusion

The intervention of NLP techniques in the BA Economics students of EMEA College has brought a very remarkable change in the learning motivation of the student. It is

very much evident that the students of BA English who were kept as controlled group did not make significant changes as compared to the students BA Economics whom are given three months of NLP techniques trainings such as Rapport, Sensory acuity, Swish Technique and Well-formed outcome. The test score of Economics students jumped up from a class average of 9.6 to 12.5 and the English presentation timing got improved from 1 minute 1.9 minutes. It concludes that the NLP intervention has made a remarkable change in the motivation of students. Their shyness, lack of interest, anxiety level all are seemed got miraculous change in the BA Economics students. At the same time, BA English students, who were kept as controlled group could not make significant improvements or was minimum compared to Economics students. In order to revalidate the findings of the study, the same experiment should be tested in the ESL/ELT environment of other institutions within the country and outside.

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