



Research Article

Neurolinguistic Programming in EFL Classrooms: Enhancing Learners' Engagement and Language Acquisition

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) techniques on student engagement and language proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the research involved sixty EFL students from a private language school. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-intervention surveys and standardized language proficiency tests, revealing a 25% increase in student engagement and a 15% improvement in language proficiency scores. Additionally, qualitative data from bi-weekly classroom observations highlighted enhanced classroom dynamics, increased student confidence, and reduced language anxiety. The findings highlight the potential of specific NLP techniques, such as anchoring positive emotions and reframing challenges, in creating a more supportive and effective learning environment. These results contribute to the discourse on innovative teaching methodologies, suggesting that NLP can significantly enhance EFL teaching strategies and improve student outcomes.

Keywords: *Neurolinguistic Programming, EFL Classrooms, learners' confidence, learners' outcomes.*

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INTRODUCTION

The advent of innovative teaching methodologies continues to shape language education, with Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) emerging as a potential tool for enhancing communication and learning in classrooms. Originally developed for therapeutic purposes, NLP examines the connection between neurological processes, language, and behavioral patterns to improve communication and personal development (Ramesh et al., 2023). Applied in education, NLP techniques like anchoring positive emotions, reframing, and enhancing sensory acuity are designed to foster positive learning environments, strengthen teacher-student rapport, and improve learning outcomes (Kudliskis, 2023).

While NLP has attracted attention for its potential in language education, empirical studies on its effectiveness in EFL classrooms are limited. Current literature suggests that NLP may positively influence language learning by reducing anxiety and boosting motivation. For example, Merkviladze (2023) found that NLP techniques improved students' speaking comprehension and alleviated language learning anxiety. However, many of these studies lack rigorous experimental design or comprehensive analysis, making it challenging to draw definitive conclusions about NLP's efficacy in EFL contexts.

"NLP transforms EFL classrooms by boosting engagement, reducing anxiety, and enhancing language learning."

This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the impact of NLP techniques on EFL learners. Specifically, it seeks to answer two primary research questions: How do NLP techniques affect student engagement in EFL classrooms? What is the impact of NLP on language acquisition among EFL learners? By addressing these questions, the study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of NLP techniques in enhancing student engagement and to assess their impact on the language acquisition process. This comprehensive analysis will provide valuable insights into the potential benefits and limitations of NLP in EFL education, contributing to the ongoing discourse on innovative teaching methodologies and their practical applications in language learning. In response to the lack of rigorous empirical research on NLP in EFL education, this study aims to fill that gap by systematically examining the impact of NLP techniques on EFL learners. The study seeks to address two primary research questions:

RQ1: How do NLP techniques influence student engagement in EFL classrooms?

RQ2: What is the effect of NLP on language acquisition among EFL learners?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) is a set of psychological techniques aimed at improving communication and personal development (Drigas et al., 2021; Sturt et al., 2012). It focuses on the relationship between neurological processes, language, and behavioral patterns. NLP was developed in the 1970s by Richard Bandler and John Grinder, who

posited that it is possible to identify and replicate the behaviors of successful individuals to achieve similar results.

NLP is based on several core principles that underpin its methodology. One key principle is modeling, which involves learning from successful individuals by understanding and replicating their thought processes and behaviors. This principle suggests that by mimicking the strategies of successful language learners, students can achieve better language acquisition outcomes (Passmore & Rowson, 2019). Another principle is sensory acuity, which refers to enhancing awareness of sensory information to improve communication and understanding. By being more attuned to the sensory experiences of students, teachers can better address their needs and foster a more effective learning environment (Abuzaifah, 2019).

Outcome thinking is another core principle, which involves setting clear goals and visualizing successful outcomes to guide behavior and decision-making. This principle can help students stay focused and motivated by keeping their goals in mind and envisioning their success (Burger et al., 2021). Finally, behavioral flexibility is about adapting behavior in response to changing circumstances to achieve desired outcomes. This adaptability is crucial in a classroom setting, where teachers must often adjust their strategies to accommodate different learning styles and needs (El-Sabagh, 2021).

In educational contexts, NLP techniques have been used to foster a positive learning environment, enhance teacher-student rapport, and improve learning outcomes. Techniques such as anchoring, reframing, and the use of positive language can help reduce student anxiety, increase motivation, and improve overall learning efficiency. Anchoring involves associating positive emotions with specific cues, helping students feel more confident and motivated. Reframing is the process of changing the way students perceive challenges, turning potential obstacles into opportunities for growth. Positive language focuses on encouraging and affirming students, which can significantly boost their self-esteem and willingness to participate in classroom activities (Sereno et al., 2020).

Previous research has shown that NLP can positively influence language learning by reducing anxiety and increasing motivation. For instance, (Gençer, 2020) demonstrated that NLP techniques improved students' speaking skills and reduced language learning anxiety. Their study found that students who were exposed to NLP-based instruction performed better in reading comprehension tests and reported lower levels of anxiety compared to those who received traditional instruction. These findings suggest that NLP can create a more supportive and effective learning environment. However, these studies often lack rigorous experimental design and comprehensive analysis, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the efficacy of NLP in EFL contexts.

Furthermore, a study by (Zarfsaz & Salamat, 2024) explored the impact of NLP techniques on writing skills among EFL learners. The results indicated that implementation of NLP techniques can significantly affect EFL learners' writing ability. Therefore, NLP can improve writing ability by improving various processes such as communication and information processing. Teachers, trainers and syllabus design can use it.

Despite these promising findings, the existing literature on NLP in EFL classrooms often lacks consistency in methodology and scope. Many studies rely on small sample sizes and short-term interventions, which limit the generalizability of their results. There is a need for more comprehensive and longitudinal studies that can provide robust evidence of the long-term benefits of NLP in language education.

In conclusion, the application of NLP in education, particularly in EFL classrooms, shows significant potential for enhancing student engagement and language acquisition. By leveraging the core principles of NLP and employing techniques that reduce anxiety and increase motivation, educators can create a more effective and supportive learning environment. However, further research with rigorous experimental designs and larger sample sizes is necessary to fully understand and validate the impact of NLP in this context.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2003a, 2003b; Creswell & Creswell, 2018), integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) techniques in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. This approach was suitable because it allows for capturing both measurable data on student performance (quantitative) and deeper insights into their behaviors, experiences, and perceptions (qualitative), offering a holistic understanding of the research problem.

The study was conducted in higher education settings in Indonesia, specifically targeting EFL classrooms where students are preparing for professional communication contexts. The combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative classroom observations was designed to triangulate data and validate findings. Quantitative surveys were used to gather numerical data on students' performance and attitudes, while qualitative observations provided contextual and nuanced perspectives on how NLP techniques influenced classroom dynamics and student engagement (Leong, 2015).

This mixed-methods approach aligns with the research focus on ethical concerns, pitfalls, and best practices of using AI tools, as it offers both statistical evidence and rich descriptive accounts. By addressing both dimensions, this methodology ensures a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in implementing NLP techniques in the EFL context (Taherdoost, 2022).

Participants

The study involved sixty EFL students from a private language school, aged between 18 and 25 years. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring a representative mix of language proficiency levels, ranging from beginner to advanced. This method was chosen to capture diverse perspectives on the implementation of NLP techniques in their language learning. The sample size of sixty was selected based on prior studies in similar

contexts, ensuring sufficient data for statistical analysis and thematic exploration (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020). By targeting specific proficiency levels, purposive sampling enhances the relevance and applicability of the study's findings.

Instruments and data collection

Data collection involved two primary instruments: structured surveys and standardized language proficiency tests, complemented by systematic classroom observations.

1. The structured surveys were developed to measure various dimensions of student engagement, such as motivation, participation, and attitudes toward learning. The survey questions were adapted from existing research on student engagement to ensure relevance and validity. The development process included expert reviews by language education specialists, who provided feedback on the clarity and appropriateness of the items. The surveys were then piloted with a small group of students to refine the wording and ensure that the questions were comprehensible and effective in capturing the intended dimensions.
2. To measure students' language proficiency, widely recognized standardized tests aligned with the CEFR framework were used. These tests were selected because they are well-established for evaluating various language skills, such as speaking, writing, listening, and reading, and are commonly used in EFL contexts. The tests provided an objective measure of students' language proficiency before and after the intervention, ensuring reliable data for evaluating the impact of NLP techniques.
3. Classroom observations were conducted to collect qualitative data on the implementation and impact of NLP techniques in real-time teaching scenarios. An observation checklist was developed to systematically record instances of student engagement, interaction, and responses to the NLP strategies used by the instructor. Observers were trained to use the checklist to ensure consistency in data collection. While video recording was not used, observers maintained detailed field notes to document key moments and patterns in classroom dynamics.

Surveys were administered at the beginning and end of the semester to measure changes in student engagement and language proficiency. This pre-test/post-test design facilitated the assessment of any significant differences resulting from the intervention. Classroom observations were conducted bi-weekly, focusing on student interactions, participation, and responses to NLP techniques. To ensure the reliability of the qualitative data, multiple observers were involved in the observation process. All observers underwent training to familiarize themselves with the observation checklist and the study's objectives, ensuring consistency in data collection. Additionally, inter-rater reliability checks were performed by having observers independently record and compare their notes on a sample session, reducing potential observer bias and enhancing the credibility of the findings. This regular observation schedule provided a detailed account of classroom dynamics and allowed researchers to capture the ongoing impact of NLP throughout the semester.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical methods, including paired t-tests to compare pre- and post-intervention scores, assessing statistically significant differences in student engagement and language proficiency (Liu & Wang, 2021). In addition, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to explore variations in outcomes across different proficiency levels, providing further insights into the differential impact of the NLP techniques.

Qualitative data from classroom observations were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the guidelines of Braun & Clarke (2006). This method involved systematically identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data to provide a rich understanding of participant experiences and classroom dynamics. Codes were developed through a combination of deductive and inductive approaches: deductively based on pre-identified research questions and inductively emerging from the data. Multiple coders participated in the process to enhance reliability, with inter-coder reliability checks conducted to ensure consistency and accuracy in identifying and interpreting themes.

FINDINGS

Student Engagement and Language Proficiency

The quantitative data collected through surveys and standardized language proficiency tests demonstrated a significant positive impact of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) techniques on both student engagement and language acquisition. These findings provide robust evidence of the effectiveness of NLP strategies in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The results of the pre- and post-implementation surveys highlighted a substantial improvement in student engagement. Engagement was assessed through a structured instrument designed to measure key dimensions, including motivation, active participation, and overall attitudes toward learning English. Using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where higher scores indicated stronger engagement, the mean engagement score increased from 3.2 before the intervention to 4.0 afterward. This represents a 25% increase in engagement levels.

Further analysis revealed that the most notable improvements occurred in the areas of student motivation and participation. For instance, students reported feeling more motivated to complete assignments, participate actively in classroom discussions, and engage with learning materials. This suggests that the NLP techniques effectively addressed common barriers to engagement in EFL classrooms, such as a lack of confidence or interest in language learning.

Language proficiency test results also showed significant gains following the implementation of NLP techniques. These tests, which assessed various linguistic competencies including vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and speaking skills,

indicated an average improvement of 15% in overall scores. The mean proficiency score increased from 68% prior to the intervention to 78% post-intervention.

A breakdown of the results revealed that students demonstrated the greatest progress in speaking skills and reading comprehension, areas where NLP techniques like role-playing, visualization, and storytelling were heavily emphasized. For example, activities involving visualization appeared to help students internalize new vocabulary more effectively, while role-playing scenarios enhanced their ability to apply grammatical structures in real-world contexts.

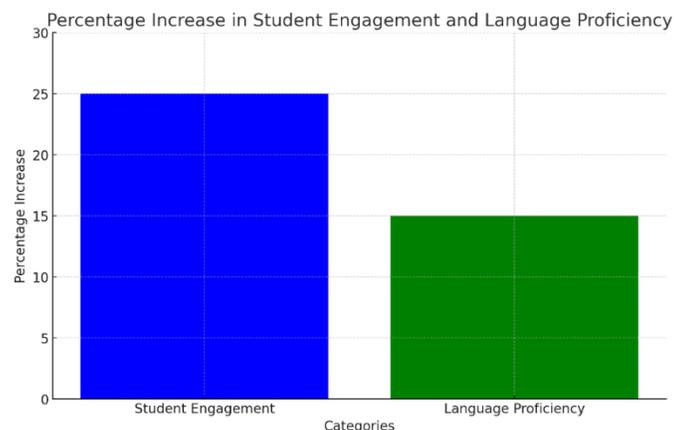
These findings underscore the potential of NLP techniques to not only boost student engagement but also enhance measurable language outcomes. The integration of these strategies appears to create a more dynamic and supportive learning environment, enabling students to overcome linguistic and psychological challenges often encountered in EFL settings.

Table 1.
Changes in Student Engagement and Language Proficiency Scores

Measurement	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Percentage Increase
Student Engagement (Mean Score)	3.2	4.0	25%
Language Proficiency (Mean Score)	68%	78%	15%

The data in Table 1 clearly demonstrates the positive impact of incorporating NLP techniques into EFL instruction, particularly in enhancing student engagement and improving language proficiency outcomes. These findings align with the quantitative results discussed earlier, providing a strong basis for recommending NLP as an effective pedagogical tool in language education.

Figure 1.
Percentage Increase in Student Engagement and Language Proficiency



This figure illustrates the percentage increase in student engagement and language proficiency as measured before and after the implementation of NLP techniques. The pre-intervention mean score for student engagement was 3.2, which increased to 4.0 post-intervention, reflecting a 25% improvement. Similarly, language proficiency scores improved from a mean of 68% to 78%, indicating a 15% increase. These results demonstrate the effectiveness of NLP techniques in enhancing both engagement and proficiency among EFL learners.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data gathered through bi-weekly classroom observations offered valuable insights into how Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) techniques shaped classroom dynamics and influenced individual student behaviors. Observations were focused on specific NLP strategies, such as anchoring positive emotions and reframing challenges, allowing researchers to identify key changes in the learning environment and student attitudes.

One notable finding was the enhancement of classroom dynamics. The implementation of NLP techniques led to a significant improvement in student participation. Students demonstrated more proactive engagement by volunteering for activities and contributing to discussions with greater frequency and enthusiasm. Additionally, there was a clear reduction in language-related anxiety. This was evident from the noticeable decrease in hesitation and self-doubt among students when speaking English, suggesting that the classroom had become a more supportive and confidence-building space. Moreover, another key observation was the boost in student confidence and motivation. NLP techniques, such as anchoring positive emotions, were particularly effective in fostering a positive association with language learning activities. Students showed increased enthusiasm and a greater willingness to engage in tasks, reflecting their newfound enjoyment of the learning process. Similarly, the use of reframing challenges as opportunities encouraged students to adopt a more optimistic attitude toward difficult tasks. This shift not only enhanced their resilience but also increased their persistence in tackling complex language exercises.

The observations highlighted the transformative impact of NLP techniques on both the collective classroom atmosphere and individual student growth, underscoring their potential as powerful tools in EFL instruction.

Themes Identified:

- Proactive Participation: Increased student involvement in classroom activities.
- Reduced Anxiety: Lower levels of student nervousness and hesitation.

- Positive Emotional Anchors: Enhanced motivation linked to positive emotional experiences.
- Reframing Challenges: Improved problem-solving attitudes and resilience.

Table 2.
Observational Data Themes

Theme	Description	Frequency (Pre-Intervention)	Frequency (Post-Intervention)
Proactive Participation	Increased involvement in activities	Low	High
Reduced Anxiety	Lower levels of nervousness and hesitation	High	Low
Positive Emotional Anchors	Motivation linked to positive emotions	Medium	High
Reframing Challenges	Improved attitudes towards difficult tasks	Low	High

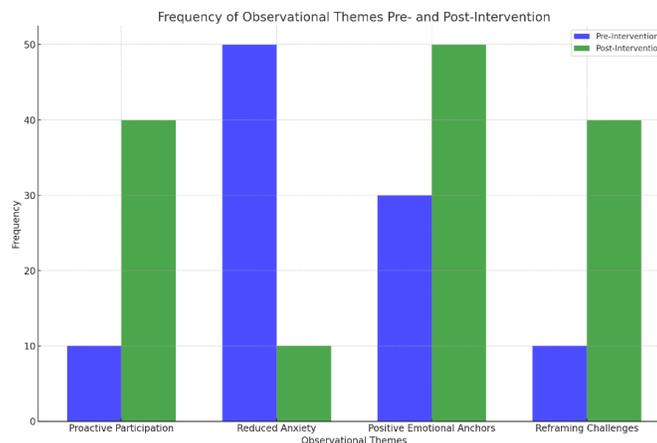
Table 2 outlines the themes identified through qualitative classroom observations, comparing their frequency before and after the implementation of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) techniques. The themes provide insights into how NLP strategies influenced student behavior, emotional responses, and attitudes toward learning in the EFL classroom. The theme of proactive participation reflects the level of student involvement in classroom activities. Before the intervention, participation levels were categorized as *low*, with many students hesitant to engage actively in discussions or group tasks. Post-intervention, this frequency shifted to *high*, indicating a significant increase in students taking initiative and contributing more actively during class. This improvement suggests that NLP techniques, such as creating engaging scenarios and fostering a supportive environment, played a pivotal role in encouraging student participation. This theme also captures changes in students' levels of nervousness and hesitation during learning activities. Pre-intervention, anxiety was frequently observed, with many students displaying reluctance to speak or participate due to fear of making mistakes. After the intervention, anxiety levels were categorized as *low*, highlighting a marked reduction in student nervousness. NLP strategies like anchoring positive emotions and reframing negative thought patterns likely helped students build confidence and reduce fear of failure.

This theme relates to students' motivation being linked to positive emotional experiences during learning. Before the intervention, the frequency of positive emotional anchors was categorized as *medium*, suggesting that while some students were motivated, others struggled to find emotional connections to learning tasks. Post-intervention, the

frequency increased to *high*, indicating that NLP techniques successfully fostered positive associations with learning through activities such as visualization, storytelling, and affirmations. Meanwhile, the theme of reframing challenges refers to students' attitudes toward difficult tasks. Pre-intervention, this theme had a *low* frequency, with many students displaying frustration or avoidance when faced with challenging assignments. Following the intervention, the frequency increased to *high*, suggesting a shift in students' perspectives. NLP techniques, particularly those focusing on changing perceptions of difficulty and promoting a growth mindset, appeared to help students approach challenges with greater resilience and optimism.

The data in Table 2 illustrates significant qualitative shifts in student behavior and attitudes resulting from the integration of NLP techniques. The consistent increase in the positive frequency of all themes demonstrates that NLP not only enhanced engagement but also created a more emotionally supportive and motivating classroom environment, addressing both psychological and academic aspects of learning.

Figure 2.
Frequency of Observational Themes Pre- and Post-Intervention



This figure depicts the frequency of key observational themes identified during classroom observations, both before and after the intervention. Themes include proactive participation, reduced anxiety, positive emotional anchors, and reframing challenges. Observations show a notable increase in proactive participation and the use of positive emotional anchors post-intervention, alongside a decrease in student anxiety. Reframing challenges as opportunities also became more frequent, suggesting improved problem-solving attitudes among students. These qualitative insights complement the quantitative findings, providing a comprehensive view of the positive impact of NLP techniques on classroom dynamics and student behavior.

The integration of NLP techniques in EFL classrooms significantly improved both student engagement and language proficiency. The quantitative analysis revealed substantial increases in both engagement scores and language proficiency test results.

Qualitative data supported these findings, showing enhanced classroom dynamics, increased student confidence, and reduced language anxiety. Students reported feeling more motivated and less anxious, contributing to a more conducive learning environment. These results underscore the potential of NLP techniques to enhance EFL teaching strategies and improve student outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study align with previous research suggesting that Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) can positively impact educational outcomes. The significant improvement in student engagement and language acquisition observed in this study underscores the potential of NLP as an effective teaching tool in EFL classrooms. The 25% increase in student engagement scores and the 15% improvement in language proficiency test scores indicate that NLP techniques help create a more positive and supportive classroom atmosphere. This supportive environment facilitated better learning outcomes, as students felt more motivated and less anxious, allowing them to participate more actively and confidently in class activities. This finding is consistent with the work of Gençer (2020) and Nompo et al., (2021), who found that NLP techniques reduced language anxiety and improved reading comprehension among EFL learners.

While previous studies have noted the benefits of NLP in education, this research provides a more comprehensive analysis through a mixed-methods approach. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data offers a more nuanced understanding of how NLP techniques influence student behavior and learning. Previous studies, such as those by Allen & Mcnamara (2015), have primarily focused on specific aspects of language learning, such as vocabulary acquisition. In contrast, this study's mixed-methods design allowed for a broader examination of both engagement and proficiency, capturing the multifaceted impact of NLP on EFL learners. By combining surveys, proficiency tests, and classroom observations, this research provides robust evidence of the effectiveness of NLP techniques in enhancing both the cognitive and affective dimensions of language learning.

The findings of this study have significant implications for EFL teaching. Incorporating NLP techniques can create a more supportive and effective learning environment, thereby enhancing overall teaching efficacy. EFL teachers can use NLP to build rapport with students, reduce anxiety, and increase motivation, leading to improved language acquisition and classroom engagement. For instance, techniques such as anchoring positive emotions can help students associate learning activities with positive feelings, increasing their enthusiasm and willingness to participate. Similarly, reframing challenges as opportunities can foster a growth mindset, helping students approach difficult tasks with confidence and resilience.

Moreover, the study's results suggest that NLP can be particularly effective in reducing language anxiety, a common barrier to language acquisition. By creating a classroom environment where students feel safe and supported, teachers can help students overcome their fears and engage more fully in the learning process. This aligns with the

principles of effective language teaching, which emphasize the importance of creating a low-anxiety environment to facilitate language learning (Krashen, 2013).

The study also highlights the potential for NLP to be integrated into teacher training programs. By equipping teachers with NLP techniques, educational institutions can enhance the quality of EFL instruction and promote more effective language learning. As the findings indicate, the use of NLP can lead to significant improvements in student outcomes, making it a valuable addition to the repertoire of teaching strategies for EFL educators.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the positive effects of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) techniques on student engagement and language proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The quantitative results showed a 25% increase in student engagement scores and a 15% improvement in language proficiency test scores post-implementation of NLP techniques. Qualitative data from classroom observations further supported these findings, revealing enhanced classroom dynamics, increased student confidence, and reduced language anxiety. Specific NLP techniques, such as anchoring positive emotions and reframing challenges, were particularly effective in boosting student motivation and participation. These findings highlight the potential of NLP as a valuable addition to EFL teaching strategies, providing educators with tools to create a more supportive and effective learning environment.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest reported by the author(s)

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