Teachers' Perspective on the Applicability of Neuro-linguistic Programming to Address EFL Learners' Speaking Anxiety (Case of the Universities in Georgia)

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Abstract

Effective communication skill has gained a huge priority on every path of an individual's life and in a professional context. Speaking in the target language helps learners to create the context and produce the language. Anxiety encountered while speaking in a foreign language is one of the major factors that may lead to preventing the learners from achieving academic goals and lowering their motivation and self-esteem. The impact of anxiety in foreign language acquisition and speaking performance has been widely researched, while the implementation of NLP (Neuro-linguistic programming) in EFL classes in order to address speaking anxiety has not been investigated sufficiently. The teachers' awareness of NLP techniques in foreign language classrooms in order to address anxiety is not explored as well. The primary objective of the current paper was to explore the applicability of NLP techniques in EFL classes for reducing learners' speaking anxiety. The paper also attempted to explore EFL teachers' awareness of the topic under investigation. Participants of the study were 61 EFL teachers at the universities in Georgia. According to the research findings, teachers are familiar with NLP techniques at some level and most frequently use Modeling, Visualization, and Rapport. They also showed a positive attitude towards further implementation of NLP techniques. Overall, the current paper revealed that teachers need to be equipped with practical tools for implementing NLP techniques in EFL classrooms to address speaking anxiety among learners. A more thorough examination of the topic under investigation is also strongly recommended.

Keywords: Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP); Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL); Language learning; EFL speaking; Speaking anxiety.

1. Introduction

If thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought

George Orwell

The ability to effectively communicate in the modern globalization era is deemed to be the most important among all four key language skills when learning English as a Foreign Language. In order to fulfill their personal and career goals, the learners need to be equipped with skills to speak fluently and accurately without anxiety and fear. According to Shumin (1997), three primary components of speaking effectiveness can be distinguished: a) *Grammatical competence* (morphology, syntax, vocabulary); b) *Discourse competence* (the ability to perceive and process coherence and meaning of what is heard and said; c) *Sociolinguistic competence* (the rules and norms "governing the appropriate timing and realization of speech acts (Shumin, 1997, p. 207).

Various factors are affecting the development of learners' speaking ability. Sociocultural factors, emotions, self-esteem, empathy, anxiety, attitudes, mindset, and even their language and the way they speak in L1 can be accounted for affecting the acquisition

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of speaking skills (Shumin, 1997). Among the aforementioned factors anxiety is one of the most commonly reported challenges that the learners have to overcome while speaking in the target language. It often results from their perception of the mistakes as their failures and ends in building a negative self-image and lower self-confidence. As a result, their ability to speak confidently fades.

In recent years there has been an increasing interest in teaching strategies of Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). As research indicates, NLP plays a crucial role in assisting humans in terms of communicating with themselves and controlling emotions and anxiety (Nompo, Pragholapati, & Thome, 2021). As posited in Begum, Paulraj, and Banu (2022), NLP can be seen as a highly assistive model to help learners as well as teachers develop critical thinking, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, empathy and the ability to achieve academic and personal goals (Begum, Paulraj, & Banu, 2022).

However, it is challenging to find ways to effectively incorporate NLP in language learning classrooms. Even though NLP is widely researched and used in various fields, more studies are still necessary to be conducted on its contribution to foreign language teaching and learning.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA)

There is a myriad of reasons that make developing speaking in the target language challenging. EFL learners may be impeded from effective language acquisition since they may be critical and judgemental of teaching methods that can be accounted for by their previous learning experiences. Another affecting factor may be the learners' predispositions to particular methods and teaching styles and their own set of patterns of learning. Another reason affecting EFL learners' foreign language acquisition is their experience of failure and criticism at school related to a language learning process that makes them anxious and less confident about their learning and language abilities. Some of them worry that their intellectual power diminishes with age and may develop low self-esteem (Harmer, 2001). Due to the aforementioned characteristics, EFL learners feel nervous and experience anxiety especially when they have to speak in front of the class (Ansari, 2015). When addressing learners' challenges in foreign language acquisition and applying various teaching approaches, all the aforementioned characteristics that they bring to EFL classrooms and any social, psychological, or cognitive aspects impairing their speaking skills in the target language should be taken into consideration.

Educational institutions should have the responsibility to create the necessary conditions for learners' academic success. They should be targeting improving students' educational and academic performance by enhancing their emotional intelligence, motivation, and positive self-image. Recent studies have shown the positive role of implementing NLP (Neuro-linguistic programming) techniques in the teaching and learning process and have shown how it affects the learners' anxiety level and its reduction, their attitudes toward learning, and self-esteem. Since communication is the key to success in achieving language goals and becoming fluent speakers of English, NLP can help enhance this process by significantly reducing anxiety and changing an individual's behavior patterns positively.

2.2 Cognitive and Affective Factors of Language Anxiety

The learners differ in dimensions and thus achieve different levels of performance and success in a foreign language (Gkonou, 2011, p. 268). Anxiety is one of the most common emotions that emerge in the process of foreign language acquisition and is usually associated with tension, frustration, and uneasiness (Shomoossi, 2009). The level of anxiety can be illustrated in several aspects. It may have physical effects expressed by irregular heartbeat, muscle tension, and excessive sweating; it can also have psychological effects such as shame, anxiety, and fear and it may show social effects that can include reluctance to communicate

and avoid producing the target language. It has also been reported that anxiety may affect the EFL learners' communication strategies, since they may have less attempt to take risks in language classes that may lead to failure in language acquisition (Cutrone, 2009). It is of vital importance for teachers to consider the anxiety students may experience to create a classroom environment and atmosphere where the students will communicate effectively without fear and anxiety and thus improve their communication skills (Inada, 2021). It is a great challenge to decrease the students' level of anxiety and the teachers' emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in considering the learners' feelings and needs and choosing the techniques and activities considering EFL learners' interests, reactions, feelings, and learning styles. Besides, they should identify the contributing sources and causes of anxiety by attempting to adopt the students' perspective (Inada, 2021, p.33). It is crucial to create a relaxed, risk-free classroom environment and balance the challenge and facilitative anxiety as students become more anxious when the challenge is too great and out of the Zone of their Proximal Development (ZPD). Increasing the opportunities for more speaking is also of vital importance as often EFL learners underestimate their speaking abilities in TL (target language).

There are various cognitive and affective factors related to language learning. Anxiety is one of these factors that has always been a significant problem experienced by adult learners of English. Anxiety can be defined as "subjective, consciously perceived feelings of apprehension and tension, accompanied by or associated with activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Wilson, 2006) cited in (Kasimi, 2022). From the behavioristic perspective, anxiety is defined as the feeling of an individual's weakness and inability to cope with real or imaginary threats and thus, it has to deal with one's negative feelings about own ability (Kurniawati, 2016, p1). The anxiety among EFL learners can be caused by situational variables such as classroom activities, level, instructor, and organization. It can also be accounted by the learners' beliefs, age, learning styles, strategies or the shyness about communication with people, difficulty in understanding the teacher's instructions, fear of negative evaluation, fear of mistakes, fear of losing face in front of others (Tanveer, 2008).

Riasati (2011) distinguishes six potential sources of anxiety: a) personal and interpersonal anxiety; b) instructor's beliefs about language teaching, c) learner's beliefs about language learning, d) language testing, e) classroom procedures, f) instructor-learner actions (Riasati, 2011). Woodrow (2006) classifies three categories of anxiety that are: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. As he defines in his paper, trait anxiety occurs in response to stressful situations and is related to the part of learners' personality and the perception of the world. State anxiety is rather a temporary condition experienced at a particular moment. According to Woodraw, situation-specific anxiety occurs only in specific situations, namely in the classroom (Woodrow, 2006, p.309).

Anxiety can be categorized as debilitative and facilitative according to the outcomes. Anxiety that leads students to have problems with concentration, unwillingness to participate in classroom activities, and low self-esteem will be categorized as debilitative anxiety. However, anxiety can be facilitative especially when it motivates students to learn more and better prepare for class or exams (Waniek-Klimczak & Pawlak, 2015; Erdiana, Daud, Sari, & Dwitami, 2020; Gopang, Bughio, & Lohar, 2015).

2.3 Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.

William Shakespeare

The challenges EFL learners face while acquiring the target language can be addressed from various perspectives and tackling tools. Created in the 1970s by Richard Bandler and John Grinder, nowadays NLP has been expanded in every single field of study since it focuses on making behavioral changes and can be adapted to a variety of different goals. NLP encompasses neurological and linguistic processes and refers to the impact of language on an individual's cognitive process and subsequent actions. NLP

puts the main emphasis on effective communication and the ability to influence others (Bandler & Grinder, 1975; O'Connor & McDermott, 2015; Burn, 2005).

The NLP techniques are part of Neuro-linguistic programming that is nowadays considered to be a very significant technique to help an individual achieve personal and professional goals, master thinking processes, and become more aware of one's strengths and weaknesses. NLP techniques are powerful ways to change one's mindset and thus, their lives for better (Robins, 1992). By the utilization of NLP techniques an individual can change the way one thinks, feels, and behaves by changing the person's focus, since if the latter changes, energy flows.

NLP pertains to the thought patterns and the language used in interpersonal relationships and it also emphasizes how can the mind be trained by analyzing behavioral patterns and the use of language (Priya, 2017, p.208). It can provide insights into a person's way of thinking by analyzing one's language use. Careful analysis enhances improving the person's communication skills by understanding how one can alter thoughts and actions to achieve the set goals.

NLP studies how an individual structures subjective experience – how one thinks about their values and beliefs and how they create their emotional states. NLP believes that the event does not have the meaning itself and the latter is given to it by an individual. Since NLP studied the best communicators, it evolved into the systematic study of human communication adding practical tools and methods generated by modeling exceptional people. These tools are nowadays widely used by businesses, sales, law, and education. NLP is the way of thinking and exploration. The name brings together *Neurology* (the mind and how individuals think); *Linguistics* (How individuals use language and how it affects them) and *Programming* (how individuals sequence their actions to achieve their goals).

NLP is different from other systems of psychology in terms of seeing the conscious and unconscious mind. The way it sees the conscious mind is about the awareness of the present moment and this depends on how an individual organizes information. The unconscious mind in NLP is a container of thoughts, feelings, emotions, resources, and possibilities that an individual does not pay attention to at the given time, and the aforementioned become conscious when a person switches his/her attention (O'Connor & McDermott, 2015, p. 9). Some things such as carbon dioxide concentration in the blood, the way an individual's heart is, and what the liver is doing will stay in the subconscious as some beliefs and values. As O'Connor posits,

> "The conscious mind is like the rider of a horse, steering and guiding, setting outcomes and deciding directions. These then pass into the unconscious and we start to take actions to achieve them. The unconscious is like the horse that does the work in getting to where the rider wants, it is not a good idea to let the horse set the directions. Nor is it a good idea for a rider to try to tell the horse exactly where to put its feet at every stage of the journey. At best, conscious and unconscious form a balanced partnership" (O'Connor & McDermott, 2015, p. 9).

NLP divides learning into four main stages: a) *Unconscious incompetence* (individual does not know and does not know that he does not know; b) *Conscious incompetence* (after practicing the particular skill, the individual knows that he is not very good at it and learns it fast at this stage) c) *Conscious competence* (individual has a skill, but it is not yet consistent and habitual) d) *Unconscious competence* (skill is habitual and automatic). In the process of acquiring speaking skills in the target language, the students may be stuck in the so-called "anxiety zone" when they feel anxious or helpless since they perceive the difficulty of the task as greater than the resources they have. So, it can be suggested that the learning zone is the area where the perceived difficulty matches the perceived resources and the anxiety zone is when "perceived difficulty is much greater than perceived resources" (O'Connor & McDermott, 2015, p. 25).
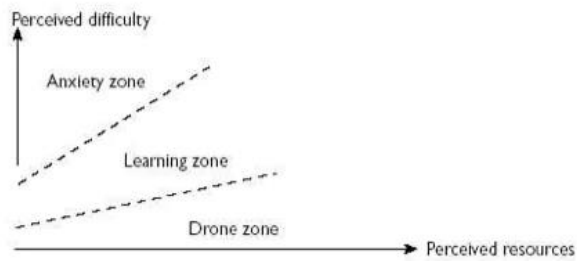
(O'Connor & McDermott, 2015, p. 26)

NLP can be widely used to treat phobias or other expressions of anxiety such as panic attacks. Therapists can use it to reveal unproductive patterns of a person's characteristics and thought process and can equip them with empowering habits and effective strategies. Apart from addressing various mental health issues, NLP techniques are implemented to enhance personal growth and bring fulfillment to an individual's life. NLP is widely utilized for building effective communication skills, public speaking, sales and negotiation, team building, and leadership due to its action-oriented nature. As indicated by Rayati (2021), the ultimate aim of implementing NLP in the teaching and learning process is to increase the effectiveness and pace of the goal-oriented learning (Rayati, 2021).

2.4 NLP Techniques for EFL Classroom

Linking Criteria Technique

The Linking Criteria Technique is finding out what an individual wants according to their criteria. The primary idea of this technique is to model the language and the behavior in a way to makes learning happen. It encourages learning and enhances the internal representations of learners to direct them towards the desired outcomes. Model can also assist the teachers to develop functional and constructive relationships with students directing their motivation and effort towards the desired outcome (Kong, 2012).

Rapport

Success in language teaching depends less on materials, techniques, and linguistic analysis and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom

Ian Ellsworth

Due to the unique social and interpersonal nature of foreign language classrooms, teachers should strive to establish positive rapport. It is the bridge between English language proficiency and cultural awareness to foster language acquisition. According to Brown (2001), rapport is "the relationship and respect that leads to students' feeling capable, competent, and creative" (Douglas, 2001, p. 202).

There are different ways to build the rapport between the teacher and the students. For instance:

- Learning the names of everyone in the classroom

- Showing interest in their lives outside the classroom

- Making eye contact with the students

- Including get-to-know activities at the start of a course

- Being approachable and allowing students to ask questions about the teachers' life and teaching experience

- Respecting the differences and individuality of the learners

- Vary activities to increase energy and motivation in the classroom

- Praise students as much as possible

- Being enthusiastic

- Communicating positive attitude

- Showing appreciation

Anchoring

People often do not realize that their feelings and behavior have often been affected by anchors – the associations formed through repetitions. As defined by Lashkarian & and Sayadian (2015), "anchoring is the association between what we see, hear and feel and our emotional states" (Lashkarian & Sayadian, 2015, p. 511). To make it simple Ivan Pavlov's experiment with dogs would be helpful for the reader. He rang the bell that worked as a stimulus at the same time he fed the dogs. As time passed, the dog's mouth would salivate simply by hearing the bell. The dogs made a positive association between the bell ringing and mealtime (Adams, 2020). The anchors can be linked with the negative feelings. These anchors can simply be the smell of the cologne that may remind a person about someone who broke their heart, and the cologne may work as a negative anchor. There can be various types of anchors that may bring positive associations to EFL students. Such as auditory (listening to the song); repeating positive phrases; Anchors can be kinesthetic; Olfactory (smell – for instance, a nasal inhaler such as watermint, melon drop, tropical rush); Anchors can be gustatory as well since taste can bring a person into a healthy mental state. Due to anchoring techniques, it is suggested that the teacher should make the teaching multisensory since students have a wider array of sensory stimuli to link the language to the brain.

Modeling

Modeling techniques can be considered as the basis of NLP methodology. It is believed that "any action of the people, regardless of how complex, can be reduced to a specific structure to be repeated by other people, if given this structure as a behavioral model" (Ilieva-Koleva & Vazov, 2014). NLP modeling entails the process of transferring explicit and tacit knowledge with help from an expert. It involves the ability to replicate the desired results and pass on the acquired expertise to others. If this technique is transferred to an EFL classroom environment modeling can be seen as a teaching approach wherein the educator explicitly demonstrates to students how to perform a task. Teachers who exemplify the necessary steps, significantly reduce the likelihood of students having questions or feeling unsure about the assignment and therefore develop anxiety. Modeling in EFL classes offers students a clear mental image of how to approach the given task, instilling confidence in their ability to complete it. Utilizing modeling can alleviate frustration and contribute to maintaining an orderly classroom environment.

Visualization

Visualization entails generating mental images in one's mind. In this context, it encompasses the ability to conjure visual representations, auditory experiences, movements, tactile sensations, as well as perceptions of tastes and smells. Through the practice of visualization into a desired future state. Example script: *Script*

> "Sit with your back straight. Take a few deep breaths (Wait 20 seconds). Now close your eyes and breathe normally. If you don't want to close your eyes, that's fine. Listen to the sound of your breath coming in and going out. (Wait 20 - 30 seconds)

Imagine you have a TV set in front of your eyes. When you switch on the TV I'd like you to see a white screen. Switch on your TV now and see the white screen. (Wait 20 seconds)

Now write your name on the screen in black using your left or right hand. (Wait 20 - 30 seconds

Now change the color of the screen and your name. Choose your favorite colors. Make the colors as bright as possible. (Wait 20 -30 seconds)

You are now going to turn up the volume. When you turn up the volume you will hear your favourite music or song. Turn up the music so you can hear it. (Wait 20 - 30 seconds)

Now let the music and the screen disappear and switch off your TV.

When you're ready open your eyes again". (British Council).

Swish

Swish is the NLP technique that involves transforming a negative thought into a positive one. When addressing students, a teacher should convey that anxiety in any aspect of life reflects a negative thought pattern. The latter often leads to an unfavorable self-image, but it can be substituted with a more positive self-perception. During this process of transformation, NLP aids in selecting a realistic self-image and firmly embedding it in the mind. The positive self-image is then applied to activities that were previously associated with negative thoughts. With the help of the swish technique, a learner can switch from bad experiences like failure, and difficulties in learning (Rasheed & Kotta, 2017).

Visual Kinesthetic Dissociation (VK/D)

This technique is designed to eliminate bad feelings about past events. It works with the help of re-running a memory associated with the past in a dissociated state. A language teacher also uses this technique to encourage his/her students and give them a motivational view toward language learning. Sometimes, a language learner hesitates to continue the learning process due to earlier mistakes done by him which affected the learning at a large scale. The teacher convinces the learner not to think about previous mistakes and focus on the present right way of learning that will lead to the desired output (Kushwaha & Suresh, 2021).

Reframing

The foundation of NLP reframing is the notion that one's interpretation of an event or condition is subjective and flexible. Any situation may be reframed by altering the context, the focus, and the language of the interpretation one gives to it. For instance, if the student fails an exam, s/he can view it differently as a chance for learning, a challenge, feedback, or inspiration to get better. Teachers can employ reframing to make materials tangible for the students by drawing his or her own experiences. It helps EFL learners change how they think about language which makes it a more motivating tool.

3. Methodology

The current paper attempted to explore the applicability of NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) in English as a Foreign Language class at the universities in Georgia. The study also examined EFL teachers' awareness, readiness, and attitude toward utilizing NLP techniques in EFL classes to reduce speaking anxiety among university students.

3.1. Methods

This study utilized a quantitative research design to provide an objective and systematic process to describe the applicability of NLP in EFL classes and teachers' attitudes towards using the NLP techniques to address speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms.

3.2. Participants

Non-probability sampling method was used to select the participants of the study. The latter were purposefully selected based on non-random criteria administering a purposive sampling method to meet the research objectives. Since the study aims to investigate the EFL teachers' attitudes and applicability of Neuro-linguistic Programming to reduce the learners' speaking anxiety, the participants were 61 EFL teachers of private and public universities in Georgia to accurately meet the objectives of the study. The majority has been teaching English as a Foreign Language for 11 to 20 years and almost a quarter of the sample has more than 20 years of teaching experience which makes them very suitable assets in the process of collecting the valuable data. Although providing the fact that the purposive sampling method is considered rather subjective, the primary source of composing the study sample was based on the objective criteria implying the participants' teaching experience and expertise in foreign language teaching methodology.

3.3. Procedure

The survey with closed questions (Likert-scale; multiple choice) was administered and shared with the research participants. The questions were related to related to EFL learners' anxiety and the reasons accounted for it; the applicability of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) techniques; teachers' awareness about the particular techniques of NLP and their attitudes towards future implementation of the techniques in EFL classrooms.

3.4. Results and Analysis

The research population comprised 61 research participants. All of them are English as a Foreign Language teachers at the universities in Georgia. As can be seen from the pie chart below, the age range of the majority (40%) of the participants is from 31 to 40. 35% of the teachers are from 41 to 50. 45% have more than 11 years of teaching experience, followed by 30% of the teachers having more than 20 years of experience teaching English as a Foreign Language. A quarter of the research population (25%) has been teaching English for 3 to 10 years.

Figure 1. The age range of the research participants
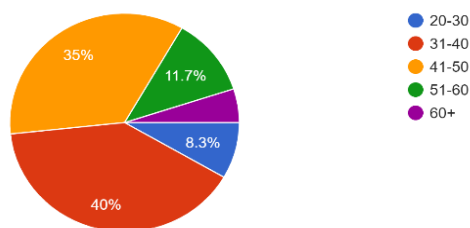
The research participants were asked to choose the factors affecting the development of anxiety among EFL learners. Figure 1 illustrates that there are three major causes of anxiety in EFL classrooms: lack of self-confidence (90.2%); achievement stress (50.8%) and unpreparedness (44.3%). 36.1% of the teachers consider that the negative evaluation may be the source of anxiety and 31.1% consider it is the age and proficiency issues that are accounted for causing anxiety among EFL students. Less than a quarter of the participants (23%) think that the learners are anxious while speaking due to the feedback problem and only 8.2% of the participants believe that the speaking anxiety among learners may be conditioned by their gender background.
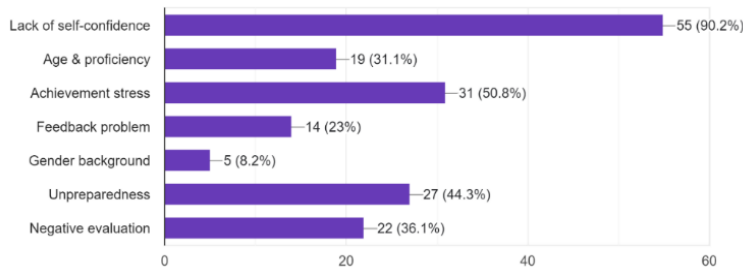
Figure 2. Causes of speaking anxiety among EFL learners

Figure 2 below depicts the teacher participants' familiarity with NLP techniques. According to the chart, almost half of the teachers (41%) agreed that they are familiar with NLP techniques, although, there is a minute difference between these numbers and the percentage of the teachers who chose the neutral answer. Namely, 36.1% of the participants indicated NA/ND (Neither Agree/Nor Disagree) answer. The latter tendency will be discussed in the following chapters of the paper. 3.3% of the teachers disagreed and 6.6% of them strongly disagreed with the statement that they are familiar with NLP techniques.
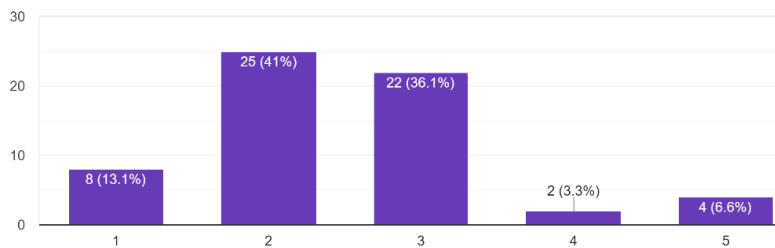
Figure 3. Teachers' familiarity with NLP techniques

Figure 3 below shows whether the teacher participants use NLP techniques in EFL classrooms. 14.8% of the research population strongly agree and 39.3% agree with the statement that they use NLP techniques in EFL classrooms., likewise the other research questions, Figure 3 shows that 29.5% of teachers neither agree nor disagree with the applicability of NLP techniques in their classrooms.
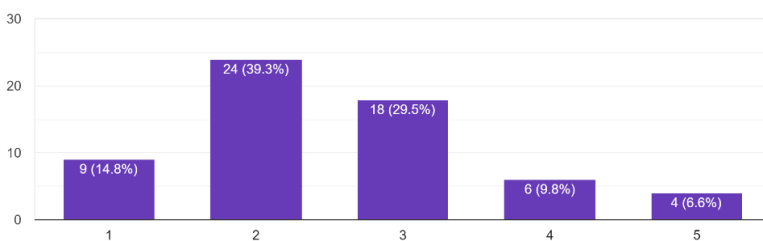
Figure 4. The applicability of NLP techniques in EFL classrooms

Figure 4 below is the representation of the techniques that the teacher participants use in EFL classrooms. The most reported techniques were *Rapport* (60.7%); *Modeling* (75.4%) and *Visualization* (72.1%). As Figure 4 illustrates, 29.5% of the teacher participants indicated that they use the Visual Kinesthetic Dissociation (VK/D) technique and 18% of them opted for *Anchoring*.

According to the data, the least applied technique is *Swish* (8.2%). 11.5% of the teachers indicated that they are not familiar with any of the NLP techniques.

Figure 5. NLP techniques used by the teachers
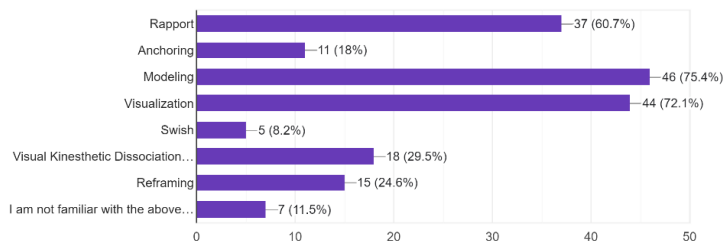
As shown in Figure 5, more than a quarter (29.5%) of the research population strongly agreed and almost half (44.3%) of the teachers agree that it is the right time for EFL teachers to use NLP techniques in foreign language classrooms. 23% of the participants showed a neutral attitude by opting for the NA/ND answer.

Figure 6. Teachers' attitude towards using NLP techniques in EFL classrooms
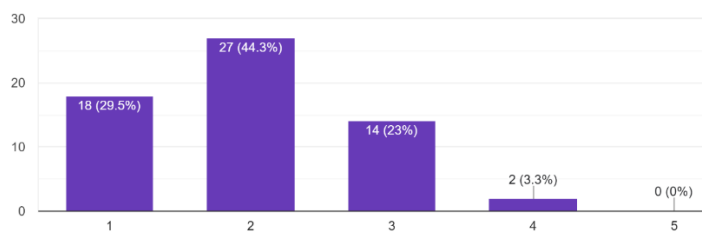
3.5. Discussion

For some students, the process of learning a foreign language can be stressful and upsetting. This is largely due to individual differences including socio-demographic factors as well as psychological aspects such as anxiety, motivation, personality traits, and self-efficacy (Wentzel & Wigfield, 2009; Shirvan, Khajavy, & Nazifi, 2018; Bai & Wang, 2023). These are effective components of learning a foreign language. Speaking anxiety is one of the most common and complex affective factors in developing speaking in English as a Foreign Language classrooms (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Toubot, Seng, & Abdullah, 2018). Due to the high level of anxiety learners are usually reluctant to speak. There are various social and psychological aspects behind speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms. The findings of the current research revealed the major factors affecting foreign language learners' anxiety. Lack of confidence, achievement stress, and unpreparedness were named as the reasons causing speaking anxiety among learners. It is suggested that there is a significant correlation between self-confidence and anxiety (Ozer, 2021). However, the study conducted by Ozer (2021) did not show a strong correlation between achievement stress and speaking anxiety.

The present paper aimed to examine the university EFL teachers' awareness of NLP techniques and their applicability in EFL classrooms using the survey administered on the Likert scale. The findings of the current study revealed that teachers have some knowledge of NLP techniques and use them in English as a Foreign Language classrooms since the teacher's majority outlined several mostly-applied NLP tools such as Rapport, Modeling, and Visualization. A detailed description of the aforementioned NLP

tools with practical examples of how to apply them in EFL classrooms is provided in the conclusion and recommendation chapter of the current paper.

The data collected from the questionnaire showed the minute difference in the percentages of the teachers agreeing on being aware of NLP techniques and using them and the percentage of the participants who showed a neutral position and opted for NA/ND (Neither Agree/Nor Disagree) answer. Likert scale or Agree/Disagree survey response format is usually applied when the attitudes and opinions are examined. However, the cognitive effort that the research participants are investing while answering the survey questions seems to be particularly burdensome, and complex and the response error can occur. There is a theory that "the cognitive demands of answering survey questions may exceed a respondent's motivation or ability to respond (Krosnick, 1991). There are various factors affecting the respondents' choice. They may not be able to understand the question or not be aware of the topic under investigation. Respondents tend to choose an NA/ND answer when they are uncertain or have a lack of opinion about their attitudes and choosing the neutral answer may not necessarily account for ignorance. Although, sometimes the latter is also considered to be the affecting factor, since "the tendency to manifest an opinion that is not an opinion is higher among respondents with less interest (Krosnick, et al., 2002). According to Krosnick (1991), "respondents' motivation is probably influenced by the degree to which the topic of the survey is important to them and the degree of interest participants have on it. Since the percentage of NA/ND answers was quite high among the teacher participants of the current research, it can be assumed that all the aforementioned factors should be taken into consideration and suggested that there is a necessity to raise EFL teachers' awareness of NLP techniques and its practical applicability in the classrooms to address speaking anxiety among EFL learners.

The data obtained from the teacher survey showed that the teachers are positive about using NLP techniques in EFL classrooms since as it was shown from the data, they consider it is the right time to do so to reduce speaking anxiety among learners. However, a more in-depth analysis of the reasons behind these attitudes and motivating factors for embracing NLP will be investigated in further research in the future administering interviews and focus groups with participants is planned for developing the topic further.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In the competitive, rapidly changing era of globalization, no one can argue that the ability to communicate effectively in the target language is one of the main tools that learners of English as a Foreign Language should acquire. The ability to speak fluently and accurately depends not only on the grammatical structures and the vocabulary range but also on the cognitive, social, and psychological aspects. EFL teachers should try their best to find suitable approaches and teaching tools to address the needs of each individual in the classroom. They should strive to create a safe, fear-free, engaging, positive classroom environment where the learners with have the opportunity to practice speaking in the target language and gain valuable experiences. With the change of the globalization era, the needs of the students change, the teachers must always be aware of these changes and be updated to the new possible approaches that will enhance the development of the learners' speaking ability. EFL instructors have to be aware of the psychological and social aspects of speaking and the challenges the learners face while acquiring this skill to suit the teaching methods and tools to tackle the challenges and limitations accounted for by the various factors.

One of the most recent and promising tools to address speaking anxiety among EFL students is to incorporate NLP (Neuro-linguistic Programming) techniques into foreign language classrooms. As NLP is nowadays widely used in almost every field, the education system should pay more attention to ensuring the effective implementation of NLP in the educational context. The feeling of anxiety is usually conditioned by the predisposition of an individual the experiences s/he accumulates. It is widely

affected by a lack of self-confidence, unclear self-image, and self-efficacy. Another affecting factor of anxiety may be the inability to cope with real or imaginary threats and negative feelings and beliefs about own ability.

NLP asserts that events themselves do not inherently possess meaning; rather, individuals attribute meaning to events based on their perceptions and interpretations. NLP techniques are focused on perceptual, behavioral, and communication tools to make it easier for people to change their thoughts and actions, reshape their self-image, and increase self-confidence. By changing the mindset the life of an individual changes accordingly. NLP focuses on understanding the thought processes and language usage within interpersonal relationships and places a strong emphasis on how the mind can be influenced through the analysis of behavioral patterns and language use. It has the potential to provide valuable insights into an individual's cognitive processes by examining their language use. Based on thorough analysis, using NLP techniques can lead to improved communication skills, as it helps individuals understand how they can modify their thoughts and actions to achieve their desired goals. Furthermore, NLP delves into how individuals structure their subjective experiences, including their values, beliefs, and the creation of their emotional states.

The main goal of this paper was to investigate how NLP techniques could be incorporated into English as a Foreign class to decrease speaking anxiety among learners. Additionally, the paper aimed to examine the level of awareness and the perspectives of EFL teachers regarding this subject. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that teachers possess a certain level of familiarity with NLP techniques and apply them in their EFL classrooms. A certain percentage of teachers are well versed in some of the NLP techniques that they apply in EFL classrooms while others are novices in this matter and need more exposure to the in-depth information about the particular NLP techniques that can be utilized in the classrooms to address speaking anxiety in target language. However, when examining the data from the questionnaire, it became apparent that there was a slight difference in the percentages of teachers who confirmed their awareness of NLP techniques and their utilization, compared to the percentage of participants who held a neutral position or chose the option NA/ND (Neither Agree/Nor Disagree). On this basis, several assumptions can be made. Research participants often select the NA/ND option when they are not certain or do not have a strong opinion on their attitudes. It can also result from respondents pretending to have an opinion when they do not. According to the findings, it can be assumed that there is an urge to raise teachers' awareness regarding NLP techniques and their practical application in classrooms to address speaking anxiety among EFL learners. Data obtained from the teacher survey indicated that teachers have a positive attitude toward using NLP techniques in EFL classrooms and believe that it is the right time to implement them to alleviate speaking anxiety among learners.

The practical value of the current research paper is to provide the reader with the applicable and realistic NLP techniques and tools that can be used in EFL classrooms to address speaking anxiety among learners. Because Rapport, Modeling, and Visualization are among the most frequently used NLP tools in English as a Foreign Language classrooms, the study's conclusions indicate that teachers are somewhat knowledgeable about NLP techniques and apply them there. The detailed descriptions enhanced by the examples are as follows:

Rapport

The first and foremost stage of creating a safe, positive, and engaging classroom environment is to form and maintain a positive relationship between teachers and learners. Fostering rapport is claimed to improve engagement, degree of satisfaction, and collaboration leading to effective engagement in the learning process. Building positive rapport is a direct correlation between enhancing the learners' motivation and engagement (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011). Considering the interpersonal relationships and efforts aimed at enhancing them have an influential effect on the quality of the foreign language acquisition (Dewaele & Pavelescu, 2019).

There are some practical examples of building positive rapport in EFL classrooms:

1. Remembering and Utilizing Students' Names: Try to become familiar with and appropriately pronounce the names of your pupils. Saying hello to them by name demonstrates the teacher's regard and admiration for them as unique people.

2. Using get-to-know-you exercises and icebreakers at the start of the course. To encourage students to open up and get to know one another, this can be as easy as asking pointed questions or organizing games like personal story exchanges.

3. Engaging in active listening both in group talks and one-on-one conversations. Urgeing pupils to voice their thoughts and demonstrating the teacher's appreciation for what they have to say.

4. Open and Welcoming Body Language: Making sure to project warmth and empathy through gestures, smiles, and sustained eye contact.

5. Demonstrating Sincere Interest: Take a sincere interest in the lives, customs, and experiences of the students. Being a receptive listener and enquiring about their interests, opinions, and hobbies.

6. Respecting Cultural Differences: Recognizing these distinctions and treating them with respect. Encouraging open dialogue about various cultures and promoting inclusivity.

7. Positive Remarks: Giving pupils constructive and encouraging remarks regarding their efforts and advancements. Congratulating them on their efforts and accomplishments and providing feedback on areas that require development.

8. Utilize Students' hobbies: Incorporating students' hobbies into teaching wherever possible. Learning may become more relatable and interesting as a result.

9. Telling Personal Stories: Telling appropriate personal stories. These could be anecdotes on traveling, language acquisition, or other experiences that the class could find interesting.

10. Adjusting for Different Learning Styles: Acknowledging that every student learns differently, and modifying lessons accordingly. While some students might learn best with visual aids, others might benefit more from practical exercises.

11. Being Approachable: Informing students that they can contact the teacher with any queries or worries. Establishing a setting where they can ask for assistance without feeling awkward.

12. Celebrating Achievements: Acknowledging and celebrating the students' achievements, whether they are big or small. This can be done through certificates, verbal recognition, or class celebrations.

13. Empowering Students: Encouraging students to take on leadership roles in the classroom, such as leading discussions or activities. This can make them feel valued and more connected to the class.

14. Maintaining a Sense of Humor: Appropriate humor can go a long way in building rapport. It can help create a relaxed and positive atmosphere in the classroom.

Developing a rapport takes time. It takes time and cultivation to become something that happens instantly. Being honest, kind, and sincerely concerned about students' progress and well-being in the EFL classroom is crucial.

Modelling

In the context of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), "modeling" refers to a fundamental technique where individuals observe and replicate the thoughts, behaviors, and communication styles of someone who has achieved a specific outcome or success. The objective of modeling in NLP is to identify the strategies and patterns of excellence used by a successful individual and apply them to achieve similar outcomes. Below are examples of how modeling works as a Neuro-Linguistic Programming technique:

Selecting a model: The first step in the modeling process is to choose a person (the "model") who excels in the area a person wants to improve. This could be a successful professional, athlete, teacher, or anyone who demonstrates the desired skills or behaviors.

Observation: Studying the model closely. Observing their actions, behaviors, language patterns, beliefs, and mindset. Paying attention to what they do differently leads to their success.

Breaking Down the Model's Strategy: Analyzing and deconstructing the model's strategy into specific, observable components. This includes identifying their thought processes, sensory perceptions, and the sequence of actions they take to achieve success.

Identifying Submodalities: In NLP, "submodalities" refer to the finer distinctions within an individual's sensory experiences, such as the size, color, location, or intensity of a mental image. Identifying the submodalities that the model uses in their thinking and mental representations.

Emulating the Model: Begin to emulate the model's strategies by adopting their beliefs, behaviors, and communication patterns. This may involve making changes to the individual's own beliefs, habits, and language use.

Feedback and Adjustments: Continuously seeking feedback from oneself and others to assess personal progress in emulating the model. Adjusting personal approach based on the feedback to align more closely with the model's successful strategies.

Calibration: Calibration is a process of developing a keen sense of detecting when one is on the right track in modeling efforts. A person learns to recognize and adjust their thoughts, behaviors, and beliefs to match those of the model.

Ecology Check: In NLP, ecology refers to the impact of your actions on one's overall well-being and the well-being of others. It's essential to consider whether the changes one is making through modeling are beneficial and ethical.

Iterative Process: Modeling can be an iterative process. A person may need to make ongoing adjustments and refine his/her approach as the latter gains more insights and feedback.

Achieving Desired Outcomes: The ultimate goal of modeling in NLP is to replicate the success of the model in an individual's own life. As one continues to refine his/her approach, the latter aims to achieve similar outcomes.

Modeling is a core technique in NLP that has been used in various contexts, such as personal development, coaching, and therapy. It allows individuals to learn from the best and integrate successful strategies into their own lives. It's important to note that modeling can be applied not only to professional success but also to personal growth, relationships, and any area where improvement is desired.

In an EFL classroom, the teachers can apply many aspects of NLP modeling and adapt them to their teaching goals. The modeling technique in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom mainly involves demonstrating and illustrating language concepts, behaviors, or skills for students to observe and learn from. This technique is particularly useful for teaching language skills, grammar, pronunciation, and even cultural aspects of the language. Here are some examples of how to use modeling in an EFL classroom:

Pronunciation Modeling: Example: If the aim is teaching the correct pronunciation of a specific word or phrase, the teacher can pronounce it clearly and have students listen and repeat after him/her. Using resources like audio recordings or videos to model correct pronunciation is a very effective example as well.

Grammar Modeling: Example: To teach the use of tenses, constructing and demonstrating sentences in different tenses, emphasizing the differences in verb forms and time expressions can be an option.

Writing Modeling: Example: When teaching writing skills, a teacher can write a sample essay, letter, or paragraph on the board or a slide, explaining each step and the structure. This helps students understand how to construct their own written work.

Conversational Modeling: Example: If the aim is to encourage students to engage in a particular type of conversation, such as making a phone call or giving directions, a teacher can apply a role-play and do it with a student to model how the conversation should go. For example, the teacher can act as a customer calling a restaurant to make a reservation, and the student plays the restaurant staff member.

As Bandura (1979) suggested, individuals can learn vicariously through models. Hence, the Incorporation of modeling into EFL lessons can be highly effective in helping students grasp complex language concepts and behaviors. It provides a clear example for students to follow and facilitates a deeper understanding of the language and its practical applications.

Visualization:

To enhance learning and communication skills, Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) visualization techniques can be modified for use in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. One such technique is known as "Future Pacing," and it involves helping students to vividly see and experience productive language use in the future. Here is one of the examples composed by the researcher and the author of the current paper on how to apply a visualization approach in an EFL classroom:

Procedure:

Introduction (10 minutes):
Begin by explaining the concept of "future pacing" to your students. Let them know that it's a technique that will help them mentally prepare for successful English language use in various scenarios. Emphasize that this technique can improve their confidence and fluency.

Choose Real-Life Scenarios (10 minutes):

Ask students to think of specific situations where they need to use English, such as a job interview, a presentation, or a casual conversation with a native speaker. Encourage them to share these scenarios with the class.

Guided Visualization (15 minutes):
Choose one of the scenarios shared by a student, and guide the class through a visualization exercise. For example, if a student has a job interview scenario, you can say:

"Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Imagine you are about to enter the room for your job interview. Visualize yourself confidently introducing yourself in English, answering questions fluently, and impressing the interviewer. Imagine the positive feedback and the feeling of accomplishment."

Take your time to create a detailed and immersive visualization.

Share Experiences (10 minutes):

After the guided visualization, ask students to share their experiences and what they visualized. Encourage them to discuss how they felt during the exercise and what they saw in their mental imagery.

Feedback and Discussion (15 minutes):

Facilitate a discussion on how visualization can positively impact their language skills. Discuss the power of self-confidence and belief in one's abilities. Encourage students to ask questions or express any concerns they may have.

Application (10 minutes):

Finally, challenge students to apply this visualization technique on their own. Assign them to practice future pacing for their chosen scenarios and reflect on their experiences.

Follow-Up Activities:
As a follow-up, you can have students report back on their experiences and whether they noticed improvements in their English language skills in real-life situations.

This NLP visualization technique not only helps EFL students mentally prepare for language use but also enhances their self-confidence and positive attitude toward English communication. It can be a valuable addition to language learning strategies and empower students to excel in various real-life language situations.

Based on the research findings, the additional recommendations are drawn:

- To provide an in-depth analysis of teachers' attitude and the reasons behind the positive positions, the interviews and focus groups with participants is planned to develop the topic further. It is recommended to dive deep into the motivating factors for embracing NLP in EFL classrooms.

- Teachers need to be equipped with theoretical and practical knowledge of NLP techniques and their incorporation in EFL classrooms to reduce anxiety while speaking in the target language. More in-depth research is recommended to be conducted on the topic under investigation to create new knowledge in connection with NLP and education.

- To equip teachers with practical knowledge, they need to be offered training sessions and workshops regarding practical examples for applying NLP techniques in EFL classrooms. One of the examples can be seen in the current paper where the researcher provides the procedures for using visualization procedures in the classroom.

- Further investigations are necessary to validate the use of NLP techniques in EFL classrooms. Future research should further develop and confirm the initial findings by making the research large-scale using quantitative as well as qualitative research methods administering interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires with larger group of teachers and educational experts. The areas of further research can convey various NLP techniques that can be adapted for the classroom environment and their influence on enhancing the reduction of speaking anxiety and fostering other language skills as well. For instance, rapport, modeling, and visualization can be researched further in terms of their practical utilization in EFL classrooms. The action research and case study can be carried out to create new insight into

the ways to adapt NLP techniques to EFL classrooms and this way create new knowledge for teachers that will be of practical value.

- Future research should be applied to EFL learners delving more into their perspective of anxiety while speaking in the target language. They should also get acquainted with NLP techniques to apply them in their personal and professional lives. Action research and the experiment can be carried out at the university EFL classrooms and examine the practical implementation of NLP techniques and their effect on reducing speaking anxiety in learners.

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