

NLP Strategies: An Innovative Tool to Enhance Employability Skills

Subbu Nisha. M, V. Rajasekaran

ABSTRACT--- Educators and academicians have been trying to find progress and fineness in English language teaching for years. They have postulated several methodologies with a view to making language learning easy and interesting. NLP (NeuroLinguistic Programming) is one such methodology that has been used in language teaching for many years and has gained prominence among EFL teachers and students these days. It has been acclaimed as a unique methodology used for the development of inter and intra personal skills. NLP is all about positive interpretation of people's worldly experiences and conceptions. NLP has unraveled innovative chances for language teachers to enhance their teaching methodology. The present study suggests effective strategies of Neuro Linguistic Programming that could be helpful in making students acquire some of the important employability skills. The study elucidates important employability skills such as learning skill, listening skill, writing skill, problem solving skill and assertive skill required in workplaces and expounds how NLP strategies like learning strategy, memory strategy, spelling strategy, problem solving strategy, motivation strategy could help students acquire the skills with ease. The study, in short, affirms that NLP strategies could be quite efficacious in making the students procure the skills that are indispensable in workplaces effortlessly.

Keywords—Neuro Linguistic Programming, Strategies, Employability Skill, Learning skill, Listening Skill, Writing Skill, Problem Solving Skill, Assertive Skill, Learning Strategy, Memory Strategy, Spelling Strategy, Creativity Strategy, Motivation Strategy

INTRODUCTION:

Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) is more than just a collection of techniques. It is a way of thinking. NLP is an integration of several disciplines such as neurology, psychology and linguistics. According to Milrood (2004), "NLP can be defined as an approach to language teaching which has claimed to achieve excellence in learner's performance". Antic (2006) opined that "The usage of NLP techniques in management, medicine, sports, business, law and education has been successful. It is a proven fact that language classrooms have become more effective and interesting with NLP techniques". NLP is the influence of language on our mind and subsequent behavior. It is stated by Tosey & Mathinson (2010) that "NLP has been accredited as one of the distinct approaches to enhance communication skills, learning skills and personal skills. It has been utilized to a large extent in the field of education". The term 'NeuroLinguistic Programming' is an amalgamation of three areas it brings together.

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Neuro – It refers to the nervous system. Neuro is the way we use our minds and our senses to think and make sense of our experience.

Linguistics – It refers to language, especially, how language is used to convey our ideas.

Programming – It refers to the way we consistently think or behave and how we sequence our thoughts into actions in order to achieve our goals.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a field originated by Bandler and Grinder. They asserted that the primary aim of NLP is to nurture the communication process effectively that would lead to personal development. They identified patterns used by outstanding therapists and passed them on to others. They refined these patterns which can be used for effective communication, personal change and accelerated learning. Richards & Rodgers (2001) introduced, "NLP as a supplementary technique in teaching second language". Yero (2001) believed that, "NLP is going to find a new way to education, a shift of focus".

REPRESENTATIONAL SYSTEMS OF NLP: (O'CONNOR & SEYMOUR, 1993)

The main representation systems of NLP are:

- i) The Visual System: This is made up of internal pictures, visuals and images.
- ii) The Auditory System: It is a mixture of words and other sounds
- iii) The Kinesthetic System: This is made of internal and external feelings of touch and bodily awareness.
- iv) The Olfactory System: It consists of remembered and created smells
- v) The Gustatory System: This comprises remembered and created tastes

Representational System	Example
Visual System	Pictures, images
Auditory	Words, sounds
Kinesthetic	Emotions, feelings
Olfactory	Smells
Gustatory	Tastes

ACCESSING CUES: (VAKOG)

The representational system we use is expressed through our body language, postures, voice and eye movements.

These are known as 'AccessingCues'. They are associated with using the representational systems and make them easier to access. Our memories are a cocktail of representational systems. They all have a visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory and gustatory components which is represented as **VAKOG**.

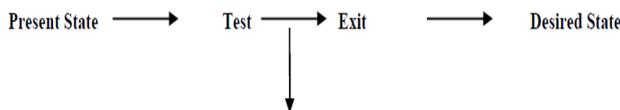
SUBMODALITIES IN NLP LITERATURE:

The submodalities are ways of thinking in terms of pictures, sounds and feelings. A picture could be described as 'in colour or black & white', a feeling as 'heavy or light', a sound as, 'high or low pitched'. These distinctions are known as submodalities in NLP literature. If representational systems are modalities, then submodalities are the building blocks of the senses.

TOTE MODEL:

As stated by O'Connor (2001) NLP identifies and uses the successful elements that different psychologies have in common. TOTE model is one such.

TOTE model is a connecting line between the present state (our present position) and the desired state (the position we would like to achieve). This comparison drives our learning at every level. 'TOTE' stands for Test-Operate-Test-Exit. Test refers to the comparison between the present and the desired state, Operate is the usage of resources to bridge the gap, Test is the comparison again and Exit is leaving from the loop when the desired state is reached.



**OPERATE STRATEGIES OF NLP:
(O'CONNOR, 2001)**

A strategy is a sequence of step by step representation that leads to an outcome. Strategies are how the thoughts and behavior are organized to accomplish a task. Strategies always aim for a positive goal. The ingredients of a strategy are the representational systems and the submodalities.

STRATEGY ELICITATION:

Eliciting strategies is one of the skilful parts of NLP. Rapport, Visual acuity, ability to ask questions are the important processes of strategy.

The ways through which strategy can be elicited are:

- i) Associating the person into the strategy
- ii) Taking the person through the strategy step by step
- iii) Paying attention to the process of the strategy
- iv) Using TOTE model

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

In today's competitive world, it is quite challenging for young graduates to get through an interview process. While the number of unemployed men is on the rise, so are the employment opportunities available to them. However, many employers say that they are unable to find suitable candidates. The problem is that they lack

employability skills necessary for professionals today. The problem of not equipping graduates with the skills expected in organizations should be dealt with without further delay.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

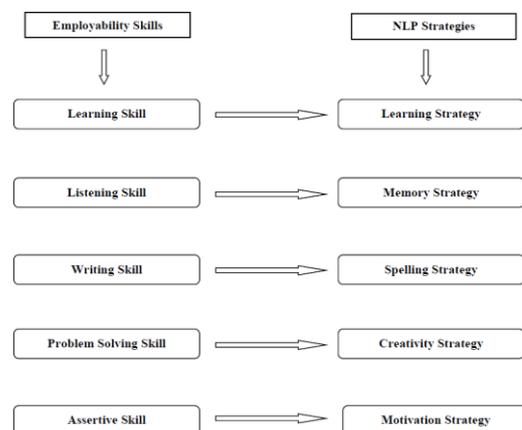
The purpose of the present study is to analyze various strategies of NLP that could be implemented in classrooms in order to make students acquire the important employability skills.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS:

Employability Skills are the skills that offer opportunities for graduates to be employable. Blom & Saeki (2011) addressed that, "the core employability skills and communication skills are considered to be important by employers during recruitment process". Koka & Raman (2015) brought out that, "the employability skills enabled graduates to keep up with the demands of employers". Mathew (2016) revealed that, "communication skills, teamwork skills and emotional intelligence skills were considered to be important by recruiters. Employability skills mold students' career by helping them in building and improving their communication skills, presentation skills, team building skills, leadership skills, time management skills, interview skills and interpersonal skills". Therefore, Dhanavel (2010) believed that, "the need to equip graduating students with the skills essential for the workplace has become an urgent concern". Thus, empowering students with soft skills would make them get through various selection procedures easily.

SUGGESTED FRAMEWORK:

It is suggested that some of the important employability skills such as learning skill, listening skill, writing skill, problem solving skill and assertive skill can be acquired through NLP strategies such as learning strategy, memory strategy, spelling strategy, creativity strategy and motivation strategy respectively.



a) Learning Skill through Learning Strategy:

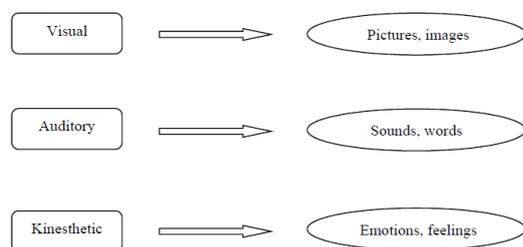
Learning skill is an important employability skill. But in educational institutions, learning is anchored to boredom



and unhappiness and therefore it becomes difficult. Learning involves gaining rapport, and pacing with students into effective strategies. It is essential to understand and respond to students' learning strategies. Some students learn better when there is an emotional bond with the teacher. Others understand a concept well when it is visually presented. Some students would rather grasp ideas when it is narrated. So strategy has to be devised taking each student's level of understanding into consideration. This could be achieved through the learning strategy of NLP.

LEARNING STRATEGY :(O'CONNOR & SEYMOUR, 1993)

The students can be put into groups based on the representational system they use. Students who operate visually can be put in group A, students who use their auditory representation system in group B, and those who use kinesthetic representation system in group C. Teaching through pictures, images, visual techniques would be beneficial to group A students whereas teaching through audios and using emotional and psychological approach would be useful for group B and C students respectively.



Thus the learning strategy would help students learn their lessons with ease.

b) Listening Skill through Memory Strategy:

Listening is a skill that human beings possess. But we seem to lose this skill as we grow older. Students are unable to listen to teachers in classrooms and to colleagues and employers in workplaces and retain their words in their memory. This can be resolved through the memory strategy of NLP.

MEMORY STRATEGY:

It is believed that the conscious mind cannot retain a twelve digit number in memory. A good, efficient memory strategy would make learning easy and effortless. As suggested by O'Connor & Seymour (1993) a strategy can be planned to chunk them together into a small number of blocks to remember them all. For instance, by translating the number, 'DJH118EDL421S' as 'Don Juan (living in H11) hated (Hell) for (4) 21 seconds would help students remember the number easily. If a mental picture is framed, it would be retained in memory for a long time. This would help students remember the word easily. Then students can be made to frame their own strategies to memorize the words. They would easily find their own way of remembering difficult words.

This kind of strategy would not only help students memorize and retain ideas in their memory but also kindle

the interest to listen to others and thereby develop their listening skill.

c) Writing Skill through Spelling Strategy:

Writing is an indispensable skill in workplaces. Writing with errors in spelling is not uncommon. Writing without spelling mistakes is an important part of writing. Many people find difficult to write in correct spelling. Spelling involves writing down the word, representing it visually on paper. NLP spelling strategy offers a solution to overcome the problem.

SPELLING STRATEGY:

As mentioned by O'Connor & Seymour (1993) the following are the important steps of NLP spelling strategy.

- i) Looking at the word to spell for a few seconds
- ii) Looking up at the mental image and then write it down
- iii) Looking up at the mental image again and spell the words

The students can be made to look at the difficult words they were given for a few seconds and can be asked to write them down by looking at the mental image of the words and spell those words. They can even be asked to visualize it in their own favorite color or font so that the word would retain in their memory. This technique would prove effective in making students learn spellings correctly and therefore would help them write without errors in spelling. Thus, this method can be very useful in learning spelling correctly which in turn would help students write with confidence.

d) Problem Solving Skill through Creativity Strategy:

A problem is a situation that needs to be dealt with. The best possible solutions to problems should be found in order to do well at work and life. The skill can be developed through creativity strategy of NLP.

CREATIVITY STRATEGY:

This is otherwise called as Disney Creativity Strategy. Disney used three different processes: the Dreamer, the Realist and the Critic in finding a solution to the problem. The strategy, as stated by O'Connor (2001), involves various levels. They are:

- i) Selecting the problem
- ii) Choosing three places- one for the dreamer, one for the critic and one for the realist
- iii) Thinking of being creative in the position of a dreamer, critic and realist one after the other
- iv) Choosing one position which is easier than the two.
- v) Repeating the position until solution is found

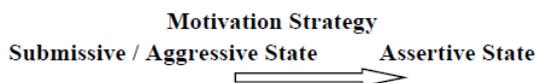
Students can be put in three groups such as visual, auditory and kinesthetic depending on the representation systems they use. Situations that require solutions can be given to students and they can be made to analyze the problem from their own perspective. Students who use their visual, auditory, kinesthetic representational systems can be asked to view the problem from the perspective of a dreamer, critic and realist respectively.

For instance, situations such as, 'In spite of learning English for more than a decade and getting through the exams in English with good grades, students are not able to speak in English fluently' can be given to students and they can be made to analyze the problem and bring out a solution from their own perspectives.

This is a good example of a balanced strategy. The dreamer usually operates visually, the realist kinesthetically and the critic auditorily. The students whose preferred representation system is visual would observe the situation from the perspective of a dreamer, students with auditory representation system would look into the problem from the perspective of a critic and students with kinesthetic representation system would analyze the problem from a realist's perspective. Thus at the end of the process, the students would come to know which perspective would be better for them in resolving the problem. Thus, the creativity strategy would help students in finding out solutions for their problems in their own way.

e) Assertive Skill through Motivation Strategy:

Assertiveness means the ability to express opinions or desires assertively with confidence. Assertive people understand their rights and responsibilities and stand up for them. They are neither shy nor hesitant to seek clarification from others. Submissiveness and aggressiveness are in contrast to assertiveness. The skill can be developed through motivation strategy. Motivation strategy of NLP offers the ability to influence the desired state of others in a positive way. Motivation strategy is a process whereby any internal or external stimulus becomes a trigger that elicits a response. It is helpful in changing a state positively, moving from an intense negative state to a neutral state i.e. from submissive or aggressive state to assertive state



MOTIVATION STRATEGY:

Motivation strategy, as postulated by Faulkner & Andreas (1994) comprises three phases. The students can be made to go through these phases one by one.

- i) **Valuable Task:** Thinking of something that would be valuable for them but couldn't be achieved.
- ii) **Results and Consequences:** Imagining of the result of getting the task done - not the process of doing it but the positive benefits and the ways of getting it done
- iii) **Change Submodalities:** Visualizing the images related to the benefits bigger, closer and colourful until it gets strongly attracted

This could be elaborated as follows.

Students who are submissive and aggressive can be made to think of being assertive. They can be asked to imagine themselves of being assertive. They can be then made to visualize bigger, closer and colorful images or pictures associated to assertiveness. They can be made to repeat it until the thoughts of being assertive becomes stronger. This

is indeed a unique way of instilling motivation. Thus the strategy would help students develop assertive skill.

Thus, it is therefore suggested that NLP strategies can be useful in developing employability skills if they are used in classrooms with utmost involvement and attention. Students can be made to acquire the skills in their classrooms without much problem and difficulty.

CONCLUSION:

According to Thornbury (2001), "NLP claims to be efficacious in achieving excellence of performance, ameliorating classroom communication, raising self-esteem, optimizing students' motivation and attitudes, facilitating personal growth in students and even altering their attitude towards life". NLP techniques were initially used in other fields such as management, science, medicine, business, it has recently been used in the field of education. It helps teachers be aware of their classroom behavior and makes them impart teaching from learners' perspective. Tosey & Mathison (2003) stated that, "NLP strategies a solution to classroom problems". Thus, in short, by knowing NLP, learning NLP and using NLP techniques with tactics, teaching-learning process would indeed become fruitful and beneficial.

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