

**An exploratory study on teachers' perspective on applicability of neurolinguistic programming in developing language learning (at the high school level)**

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**Abstract**

*Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a fast-emerging set of tools and techniques for developing linguistic competencies among learners and teachers as well. NLP enables us to better understand the way our brain processes the words that we use and how that can impact our past, present and future. Learning second language offers high level of motivation and satisfaction to the learners. Similarly, teaching second language requires lots of planning and innovation in its application. In this context, NLP could be very helpful for teachers to improve their teaching skills, and similarly, it could facilitate learners to learn second language in a congenial environment. It could provide a roadmap for teachers to enhance the linguistic competence of their learners. On the other hand, it could enable the learners to identify their grey areas and provide solutions to work on their weaknesses. At this backdrop, the present paper attempts an exploratory study of teachers' perspective on the applicability of Neuro Linguistic Programming in developing Language Skills at the High School Level.*

**Keywords:** neuro linguistic programming (NLP), second language (L2), teachers, learners, classroom, LSRW skills.

**Introduction**

In the contemporary scenario, characterized by rapid globalization and technological advancement, the demand for effective communication in English has increased significantly (Rao 2019). In acquiring English as second language (L2), less emphasis is given on its application part. Therefore, it is quite important to enable learners to use language in practical situations in L2 classrooms (Nunan & Carter 2001). Undoubtedly, it will provide them real life like situations and hone their communication skills. For non-native teachers there are various methods available to improve learners' language competency. At times, it appears to be a daunting task for any teacher to select right method and apply it in his/her L2 classroom. However, new research developments have brought rays of hope among the teachers to select an appropriate method in order to cater to the growing requirements of their learners (Vader 2024).

Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) was developed in 1970s by John Grinder (Linguist) and Richard Bandler (Mathematician). The concepts of NLP have also been adopted in language and communication (Shah 2011). It is assumed that NLP can improve communication skills and could be instrumental in learning any foreign language as it makes the use of a number of techniques to upgrade the performance in language acquisition (Cooney, Folli & Coyle 2018). Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) explores

intricate relationship between language, mind, and behavior thereby it offers a well-structured framework for improving communication and language acquisition (Nergis 2011).

At present, NLP training programmes are accessible at diverse levels, catering to the needs of practitioners and users as well across the globe (Passmore & Rowson 2019). NLP empower teachers to create active and effective learning environment. Therefore, a number of teachers have been prompted to integrate NLP principles into their teaching and learning process (Morgan-Short & Van Hell 2023). However, teachers who are well trained in NLP can use its techniques and applications in their classrooms to help the students to improve their language competency (Merkviladze 2023). On the other hand, it is very striking to note that teachers' perspective towards application of NLP in L2 classrooms at High School Level is so far less explored.

### **The Select NLP techniques in L2 classrooms**

The subtle aim of implementing NLP in the teaching and learning process is to increase the effectiveness and pace of the goal-oriented learning (Rayati 2021). English teachers can use NLP techniques that address different learning patterns and needs of students. Application of NLP in L2 Classrooms could foster a positive and engaging learning environment. It will lead to improve students' performance. A closed study of literature review facilitates the present research study to identify the most frequently used NLP techniques in L2classrooms as:

**Anchoring:** Anchors are stimulants associated with the environment, whether internal, external, or both. When these anchors are triggered, they generate responses. In NLP, anchoring refers to linking a memory, emotion, or other reaction with another element.

**Meta-Model:** This technique is based on deletions, distortions, and generalizations. It is a set of language patterns and questions that help learners become acquainted with their thoughts again.

**Metaphor method:** Metaphor uses symbolic events or items to symbolize any object. It helps to connect new information with existing knowledge.

**Mirroring:** Being in synchrony, in and out with someone, is called mirroring. Mirroring is like a silent conversation in which two people unconsciously copy each other's non-verbal cues.

**Modelling:** It is a learning technique that involves meticulously observing and analyzing a specific behavior, thought process, or skill. This analysis focuses on identifying the key components and steps involved. Following this analysis, the observed behavior or skill is described in detail or demonstrated, allowing others (or oneself) to replicate it and acquire the desired skill or knowledge.

**NLP Swish:** The Swish technique is helpful for students facing stress and negative thoughts. It is like a mental switch. Instead of getting stuck on negative thoughts, Swish helps them quickly switch to positive thoughts and desired behavior.

**Pacing and Leading:** The process of mirroring and changing the behavior of others is called pacing and leading. Pacing involves aligning communication, while leading involves guiding others towards deeper understanding.

**Reframing:** It is like looking at the same picture from different perspectives. In NLP, it means using words to change how someone sees a situation. When we reframe something, we give it a new meaning, which can change how people feel and what they do.

**Visualization:** Mentally rehearsing a task or interaction, leading to improved motor coordination and intrinsic motivation. This suggests that by creating a mental image of your desired outcome, you can enhance both your physical skill and your internal drive to succeed.

### **Theoretical background**

NLP techniques help students gain new knowledge, learn new strategies, and sharpen skills to learn efficiently and smartly (Bashir & Ghani 2012). NLP is fruitful for language learners and has a positive effect on their listening skills (Khalandi & Zoghi 2017). Language processing has the potential to stimulate emotions and vice versa. (Hinojosa et al. 2019). NLP enhances communication, promotes interactive learning, and fosters positive teacher-student relationships. NLP is a valuable tool for improving the educational experience in ELT classrooms (Keezhatta 2019). NLP brings about a change in an individual by improving the understanding of cognitive and behavioral patterns. It builds effective communication between the conscious and unconscious mental processes and can be used to promote health and self-healing. NLP techniques (Anchoring and Swish Pattern) can restructure poorly adjusted thoughts. People feel empowered and view themselves from an entirely novel perspective by engaging in self-introspection (Shivani & Sridhar 2019). NLP has a significant impact on learners' writing skills but no significant impact on learners' critical thinking. (Salehi et al. 2000). English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educators use NLP strategies to varying degrees within their teaching practices (Rayati 2021). NLP techniques can significantly enhance EFL learners' receptive skills, advocating for their integration into educational practices (Sunitha et al. 2021). NLP techniques enhance students' language competence and thus contribute to a positive influence on psychological learning. Language teachers can use any NLP technique in their language classrooms and make language learning easy and interesting (Rustan 2022). NLP is a viable means of teaching and learning but needs flexibility due to the obstacles faced in its practices. NLP is a great tool for empowering teaching skills among teachers. It is also a medium to enhance teaching and learning process (Nek Rakami & Rokeman 2023). NLP provides opportunities for learning, exploring, and enhancing learners' internal representation, leading them toward enhanced listening and speaking skills (Saraswat 2023). NLP has a significant impact on EFL learners as it can improve their academic achievement, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking (Zhang et al. 2023). NLP Reframing fosters a dynamic and positive teaching and learning environment, addressing and enhancing English language learning for students (Gashi 2024)

### **Research gaps**

Gap 1: Exploring the application of NLP techniques in L2 classrooms at the High School Level in India has not received considerable attention.

Gap 2: There is paucity of literature available on the use of NLP techniques in L2 classrooms, and the research papers do not emphasize useful methods to improve performance of learners.

### **Methodology**

The present study was conducted during February-March 2024 at the select High Schools. The selection of High Schools and the English teachers was based on the Random Sampling technique. The select High Schools were Private High Schools mostly functioning in urban areas of Vidisha. The names of the select schools were not revealed in research study as their management requested not to reveal names of their respective schools. The management of the select schools decided to apply Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) to reap its benefits in enhancing language skills. The school management opted online mode to avail NLP training for their English language teachers as various universities/ institutions in India and abroad offer online NLP training. The select schools have prompted their English language teachers to approach and complete the NLP training programme as per their convenience. After successful completion of NLP training, the teachers were offered extra incentives, increments and bonuses by their respective management.

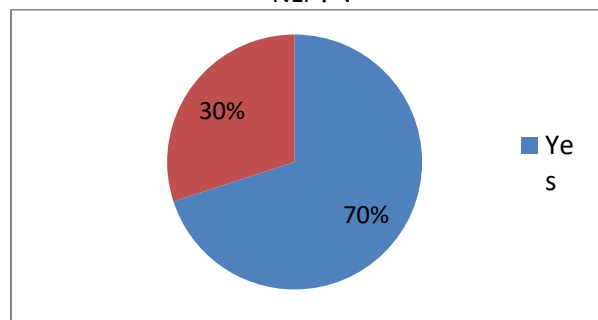
In the present research study, primary and secondary data were used. Primary data was collected from English language teachers teaching at the High School Level in Vidisha city of Madhya Pradesh, India through a well-structured questionnaire having a set of ten questions based on the application of NLP. The questionnaire consists of ten questions to analyse teachers' perspective towards the application of NLP tools and techniques in L2 classroom. The first three questions were related to analyse awareness of teachers towards NLP training and education and remaining two were based on NLP training and duration. The next four questions were based on assessing teachers' beliefs towards the development of learners' LSRW skills by implementing NLP. Question eight aimed to understand the level of students' engagement after implementation of NLP. Question nine enquires about effectiveness of NLP techniques in learning process, and question ten studies Rapport of teachers with their learners by implementing NLP. Initially, seventy-five English language teachers were approached and given questionnaires. However, only fifty-five filled questionnaires were received. Out of fifty-five, four questionnaires were rejected as they were filled inappropriately. For the present study, only fifty questionnaires were chosen. Out of fifty teachers, thirty-one were female, and nineteen were male. The responses from the questionnaires were recorded and analyzed.

The secondary data was collected through books, magazines and journals by visiting Central and State Government libraries. Online books and journals were subscribed through digital libraries and platforms. Telephonic interviews with experts were conducted to prepare conceptual framework and in designing of questionnaire. Relevant website/blogs were also explored to gather first-hand information.

A pilot study having twenty samples was conducted and it provided a pathway to restructure the questionnaire and to bring consistency in the sequence of questions. Cronbach Alpha test was applied to measure the questionnaire's reliability and validity. The value of the Cronbach alpha test was 0.7, which is significant and shows the validity and reliability of the applied questionnaire.

## Results and discussions

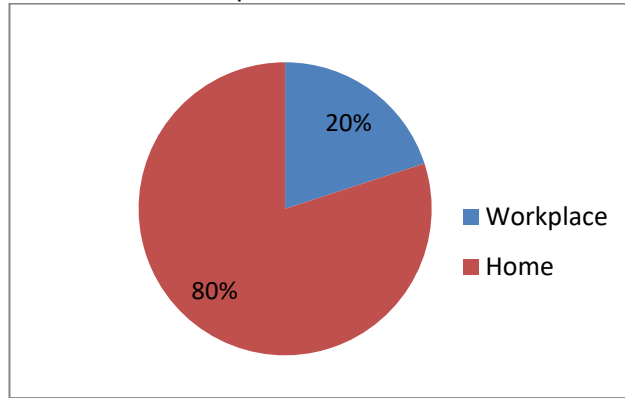
**Figure 1:** Response to the question, “Were you aware about the NLP programme before training for NLP?”.



**Source:** Data collected through questionnaire

The result indicates that most teachers, about seventy percent, were already aware of Neuro Linguistic Programming. Therefore, before the commencement of the training programme, they showed their keen interest and enthusiasm towards the training of NLP. “Neuro Linguistic Programming has a significant impact on Indian English teaching due to the inclusion of various techniques for convincing the teachers as well as the learners” (Kushwaha & K. P. Suresh 2021).

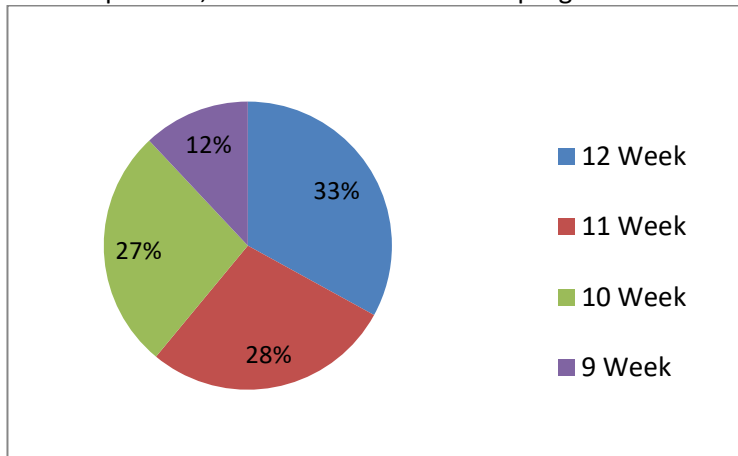
**Figure 2:** Response to the question, “Have you completed the online NLP training programme at workplace or at home?”.



**Source:** Data collected through questionnaire

“Well-designed and need-based online teacher training programmes improve teaching quality and enhance teachers’ abilities, confidence, motivation, and behavioral change” (Ahmmed et al. 2022). The data shows that most teachers found it convenient to attend and complete their online Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) training at home. Eighty percent teachers completed their training programme at home, while twenty percent completed it in school. “Working and learning from home deploy constructive and self-regulatory coping strategies” (Wallengren-Lynch et al. 2021).

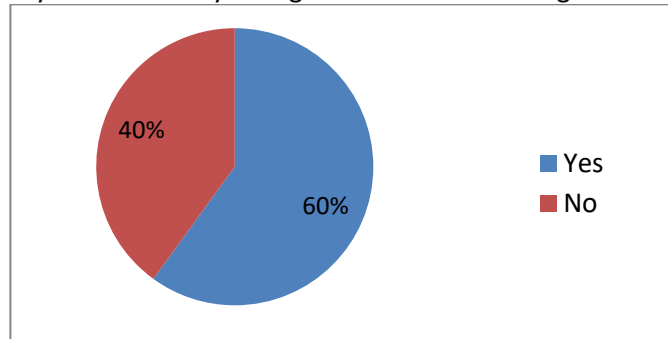
**Figure 3:** Response to the question, “The duration of the NLP programme was how many months?”.



**Source:** Data collected through questionnaire

The data reveals that almost all the teachers attended an online NLP training programme for more than nine weeks. Thirty-three percent teachers attended the programme for the entire duration of twelve weeks, while twenty-eight and twenty-seven percent teachers, respectively, attended it for eleven to twelve weeks. By using Neuro Linguistic Programming, teachers can better understand how their students learn and modify their instruction accordingly.

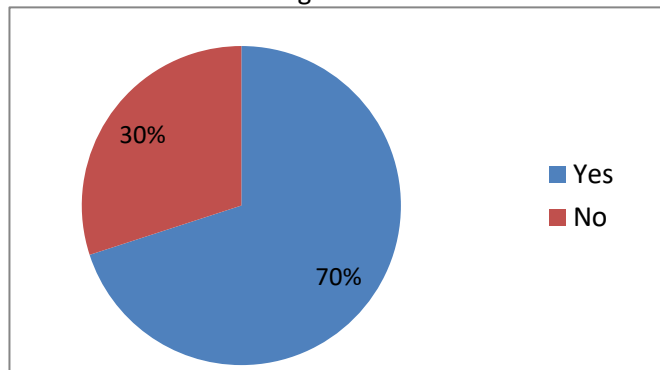
**Figure 4:** Response to the question, “After implementing NLP teaching methods in the classroom, have you noticed any change in students’ listening skill?”.



**Source:** Data collected through questionnaire

The data shows that students’ listening skills improved noticeably in the L2 classroom after the application of NLP teaching methods. Since listening is a receptive skill, a high level of concentration is required to grasp any idea and develop a better understanding. Here, by implementing NLP, it is reflected that students have improved their concentration and become more alert. This suggests that NLP techniques may equip teachers with valuable tools and techniques to enhance listening skills. “NLP is one of the best treatments for providing opportunity towards sensitising stakeholders of class towards enhancing listening and speaking skills during teaching and learning” (Saraswat 2023).

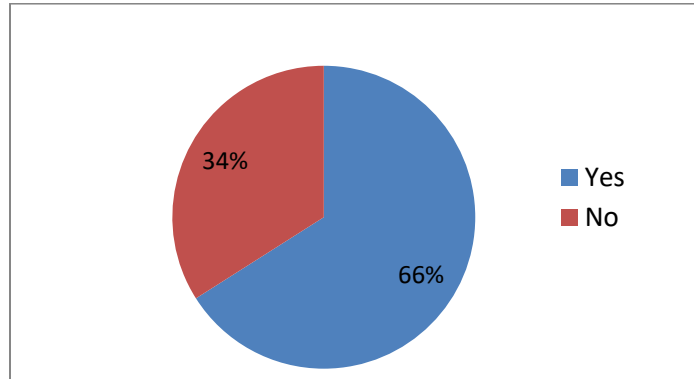
**Figure 5:** Response to the question, “Whether the speaking skill improved with the implementation of NLP teaching methods?”.



**Source:** Data collected through questionnaire

The result reveals that seventy percent teachers observed significant improvements in the students’ speaking skills following the implementation of NLP techniques in the classroom. "NLP techniques positively impact students' public speaking skills and language proficiency" (Gunawardana & Karunaratha 2023). "The use of NLP helps in the development of oral skills in the English language and also improves the student's ability to speak, especially in the criteria of Vocabulary, Grammar, Comprehension and Interaction" (Carvajal-Gavilanes et al. 2021).

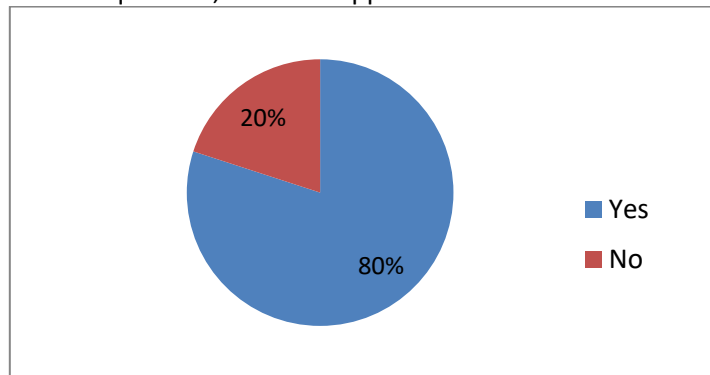
**Figure 6:** Response to the question, “Have the reading skill of students’ improved after using NLP methods in the classroom?”.



**Source:** Data collected through questionnaire

The findings demonstrate that a compelling sixty-six percent teachers have noticed striking advancement in the students’ reading skills after the integration of NLP teaching methods in their classrooms. NLP techniques lead to students’ sensory engagement, which is crucial for better learning. “NLP can be used as an approach in language learning in all aspects, especially writing and speaking” (Rustan 2022). “NLP instruction can be effective in terms of reading comprehension for undergraduate EFL learners in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses” (Farahani 2018).

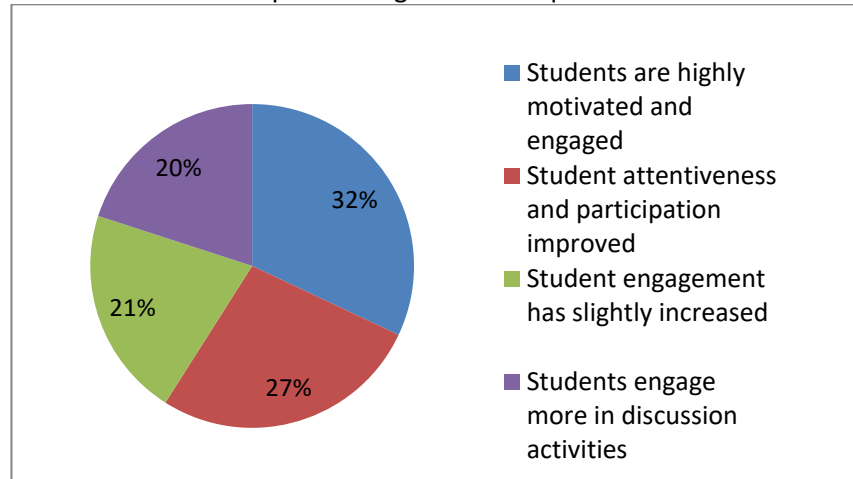
**Figure 7:** Response to the question, “Can the application of NLP refine students’ writing skills?”.



**Source:** Data collected through questionnaire

“Writing is one of the most difficult skills for second language (L2) learners to master. Out of the four skills in the language learning process, it is competent writing, which is often the last language skill that native speakers of any language, including L2 learners, acquire.” (Hamp-Lyons & Heasley 2006). “The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable texts” (Marashi & Jafari 2012). The data shows that eighty percent teachers believe that integrating NLP techniques in the classroom enhances students’ writing skills as NLP helps students with mind shifts and fosters a positive mindset. “NLP is a method that incorporates emotion into the learning process. Writing is a means of identifying emotions and determining the potential reasons for those feelings. Writing is using emotions to put one’s thoughts into words” (Zarfsaz et al. 2024). This can motivate students to write with confidence and clarity.

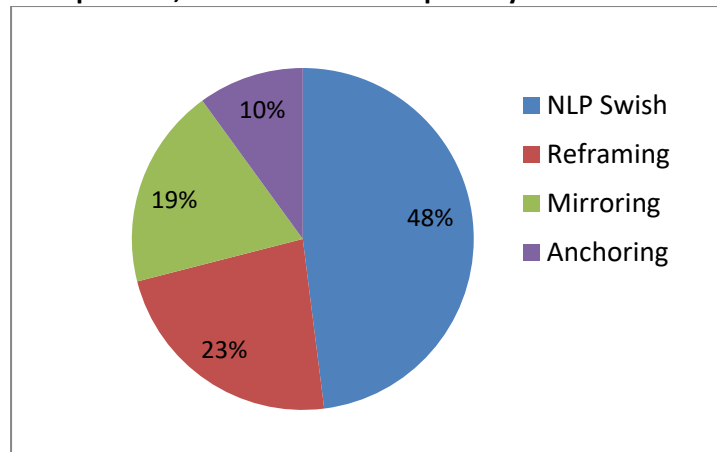
**Figure 8:** Response to the question, “How would you describe the level of students’ engagement after implementing NLP techniques?”.



**Source:** Data collected through questionnaire

The data shows that the integration of NLP techniques in the classroom has a positive impact on the students. Students are highly motivated, engaged and attentive in L2 classrooms. NLP technique such as “Reframing improves students' perceptions of self-image and the nature of communication” (Wuryaningrum & Mulyono 2023). Trained teachers can develop a positive and amicable rapport with their learners. Active participation in training programme appears very handy for teachers as that can enable them to understand their learners’ learning process and requirements so as to motivate and encourage their learners to engage actively in learning process. Thirty-two percent teachers believe that students are highly motivated and engaged after incorporation of NLP techniques in their classrooms.

**Figure 9:** Response to the question, “Which NLP technique do you find effective in learning process?”.

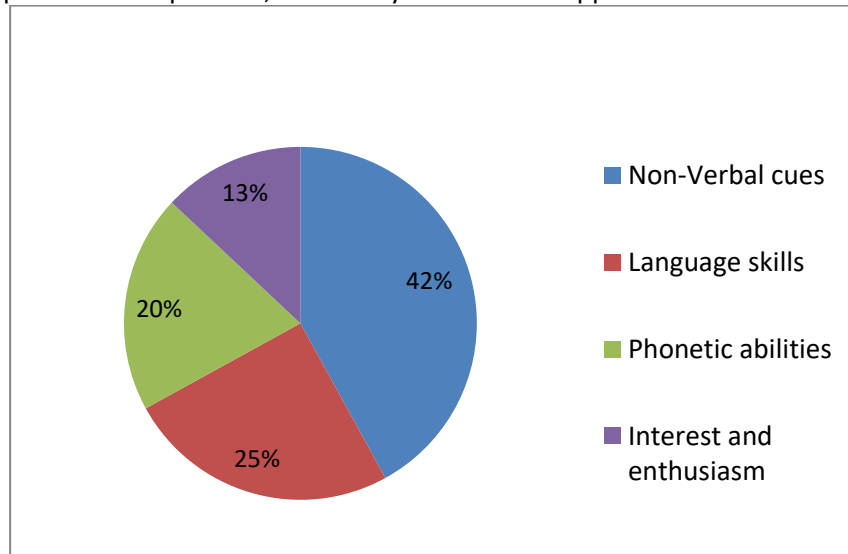


**Source:** Data collected through questionnaire

The data clearly reveals that language teachers use NLP techniques like NLP Swish (fourty-eight percent) and Reframing (twenty-three percent) to clarify students’ concepts in L2 classroom. It appears

that NLP Swish may assist students in changing negative thought patterns into positive ones, enhancing self-belief and learning. “There is a connection between neuro linguistic programming and learners’ achievements. Neuro linguistic programming resulted in significant improvements in learners’ knowledge of vocabulary. Swishing pattern as a neuro linguistic programming technique has a significant improvement in vocabulary achievement” (Moharamkhani et al. 2016).

**Figure 10:** Response to the question, “How do you establish rapport in the classroom through NLP?”.



**Source:** Data collected through questionnaire

The data shows that language teachers mainly use non-verbal cues and language skills to establish rapport in their classrooms. Forty-two percent teachers establish rapport with their learners by using non-verbal cues. They are central to building rapport. Non-verbal cues include posture, eye contact, facial expressions, and being aware of distractions. Twenty-five percent teachers use language skills for rapport building. “Building rapport is important as it determines the behaviour or response of students towards teaching and learning” (Nek Rakami & Rokeman 2023)

### Proposed classroom activities at high school level

Language teachers can use any of the following activities in their respective L2 classrooms to improve students' language Skills:

**Activity 1:** This activity uses the NLP mirroring technique, which is helpful in improving the students' speaking and listening skills. The teacher will introduce mirroring in the classroom and write sentence starters to prompt students to talk. e.g.

"If I could travel anywhere, I would go to....."

"The thing I am really passionate about is....." etc.

The teacher will divide the class into groups A and B. Each group will choose its starters and speak for five minutes. While Group A speaks, group B will listen and mirror its (verbal and nonverbal) elements, switching roles after Group A is done (Solanki, Mehta & Mehta 2020). A discussion on how mirroring improves listening and speaking skills can be done at last.

**Activity 2:** This activity uses the Metaphor method of NLP. The teacher will design index cards with different roles (teacher, singer, actor, athlete, etc.) written on them. Students will be asked to pick a card

and not reveal their roles. The teacher will instruct the students to imagine themselves in their assigned roles and use descriptive language to explain their roles to their classmates without mentioning them directly (Hilgendorf 2020). The teacher will encourage them to use metaphors, similes, and vivid details to paint a picture with their words. The student describing the picture can share new vocabulary words they used/learned in the process and encourage their classmates to contribute synonyms to expand collective knowledge.

**Activity 3:** The teacher will use the technique of pacing and leading to improve students' reading comprehension. The teacher will ask the students to read a passage from their textbook. The teacher will then divide the class into small groups. Each group will take turns and read a paragraph aloud. Here, the teacher will ask students to read at a pace and with a tone mirroring the contents of the sentence. The student, after reading the paragraph will then ask questions from their group mates. The questions would be analytical. By pacing their reading and asking leading analytical questions, students would become more involved with the text.

**Activity 4:** The teacher will apply the Meta-model, a communication tool derived from NLP. This method can improve brainstorming and generate ideas for writing (Chandler et al. 2022). For this, the teacher will give a topic for writing and ask the students to brainstorm the ideas individually in their notebooks. The teacher will then divide the class into groups and pose some 'What if' Meta-model questions like:

"What if this problem (of the given topic) didn't exist?"

"What if this would not cause that?" etc.

Each group will focus on one meta-question, which will generate new ideas, challenge students to think creatively and challenge their initial assumptions. The students will jot down new ideas with their initial brainstorming list. This will lead to a pool of interesting and creative writing content (Pearson 2013).

**Conceptual framework**

**Figure 12:** Proposed conceptual framework to develop language competence through NLP.



**Source:** Based on results of the study

**Positive Thinking:** Language teachers should build an ambience of trust and mutual understanding among the learners to overcome grammatical flaws. A Teacher has to be innovative and optimistic in applying NLP in L2 Classrooms. One has to promote creativity among the learners and a positive attitude to overcome language- learning deficiencies.

**Collaborative Participation:** Neuro Linguistic Programming could be helpful in collaborative learning. Students should be encouraged to take active part in teambuilding and peer group activities. Mirroring and Anchoring could be handy in L2 Classrooms.

**Constant Encouragement and Motivation:** Constant motivation and encouragement help any learner learn with more interest and enthusiasm. Various techniques in NLP, such as NLP Swish, can develop learners' latent skills.

**Constructive Feedback:** Neurolinguistic programming could help language teachers obtain feedback about their learners' progress. After obtaining feedback, teachers could apply remedial measures to work on their learners' grey areas.

**Enhancing LSRW Skills:** Neuro Linguistic Programming could lead learners to have a strong hold on LSRW skills. By improving LSRW skills, learners could improve their vocabulary skills as well.

**Cultivate awareness and adequate training:** Neurolinguistic programming could help teachers guide their students to develop their linguistic competence. Language teachers also require a thorough understanding and adequate training in NLP to transfer their learning to their learners. At the same time, learners are also expected to be aware of their language-learning process.

This Conceptual framework will help language teachers to implement NLP in their respective L2 Classrooms and will also provide learners with a lifetime learning opportunity to develop their personality holistically. It is noteworthy to mention here that linguistic competence cannot be mastered in isolation. Integrating NLP techniques could help language teachers to sharpen the linguistic competence of their respective learners (Salim & Shaheen 2014).

### **Concluding remarks**

Teaching is a field of constant experimentation, and NLP caters to direct each child's competency in interpreting information. According to teachers, NLP is beneficial as it relies on communication and building connections. It helps students learn and grasp concepts easily by altering their emotional and mental behavior. NLP, using techniques like anchoring, rapport, modelling, visualization, swish, and reframing, is very practical for teaching the English language (Hoobyar, Dotz & Sanders 2013).

Each technique benefits students in its own way. NLP acts as a highly effective motivational tool. It also improves the communication and persuasion skills of English learners. Using NLP in L2 classrooms may increase student interaction and build good student-student and student-teacher relationships.

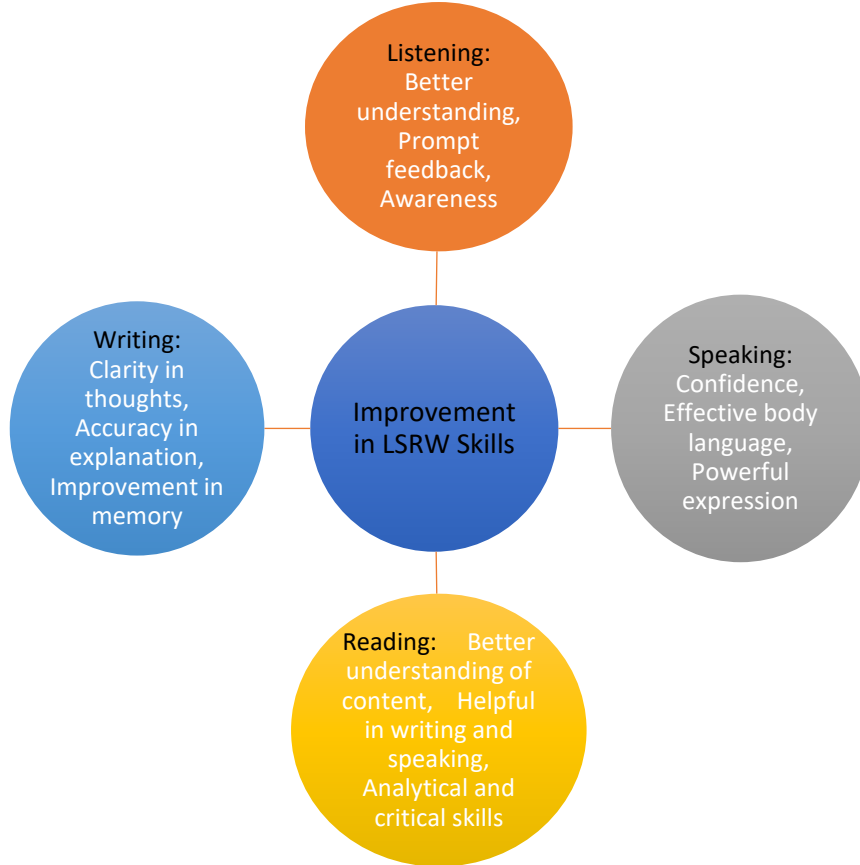
This study yields useful insights into the potential of blending Neuro Linguistics Programming techniques in the classroom based on a survey conducted on High School English language teachers. The study's result shows how integrating NLP techniques in L2 classrooms upgrades students' and teachers' teaching methods. "By understanding better learning methods using NLP techniques, teachers are able to open greater possibilities and opportunities in student's lives" (Sunitha et al. 2021).

NLP techniques foster students' engagement and cater to their diverse learning styles. This study also contributes to the field of language pedagogy as it shows the potential of NLP as a tool for creating a more active and inclusive learning environment. "People can refine their lives by changing their behavioral patterns and develop a new belief system by using NLP" (Kumar & Panda 2020)

By bringing about a deeper understanding of NLP's impact on language learning, teachers can be encouraged to deliver personalized instructions in the classroom and ultimately elevate students' performance. The study emphasizes the need for further in-depth exploration into the long-term effectiveness of specific NLP techniques on language acquisition and students' learning outcomes.

In response to question four, five, six and seven, it could be concluded that NLP may be very fruitful in improving LSRW skills of the learners.

**Figure 13:** Improvement in LSRW skills.



**Source:** Based on results of the study

### **Limitations**

A fundamental limitation of this study is that it uses a convenience sample from a single town or state. This process limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of high school English teachers trained in NLP across India. Also, using only multiple-choice questions restricts the depth of understanding regarding teachers' perceptions and experiences.

### **Future scope of study**

Research in the future could expand upon this study by using a mixed-method approach. Combining a large-scale survey method with in-depth and detailed interviews that ask open-ended questions with

NLP-trained teachers from different locations across central India could help provide a complete understanding of NLP's perceived impact on developing linguistic competence at the High School Level in India.

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