

Teachers' Perceptions towards the implementation of Neuro-Linguistics Programming (NLP) Techniques in Teaching Speaking at Indonesian Senior High School Context

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Abstract

This study examines teachers' perceptions of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) in teaching speaking within Indonesian senior high schools. A qualitative design was employed, using purposive sampling to select three English teachers. Data were collected through interviews and analyzed thematically. The findings indicate that teachers held a clear understanding of NLP as an approach linking language, cognition, and behavior. They expressed positive attitudes toward its implementation, identifying techniques such as pacing, modeling, elicitation, visualization, anchoring, and reframing as effective in fostering interactive classrooms, lowering anxiety, and enhancing students' confidence. Teachers also acknowledged challenges, particularly large class sizes, limited instructional time, and cultural factors that influenced classroom dynamics. The primary motivation for applying NLP was to overcome affective barriers such as low self-confidence and fear of mistakes considered more problematic than linguistic limitations. Overall, NLP was perceived to enrich speaking instruction by addressing both cognitive and affective aspects of learning. It provides a holistic framework that supports learner-centered, engaging, and confidence-building English speaking classrooms.

Keywords: *Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP); teachers' perceptions; speaking skills; EFL classroom ; Affective Barriers*

Introduction

In the era of globalization, English proficiency has become a crucial requirement for academic, professional, and social success (Kurniasari & Mbato, 2018). Among the four language skills, speaking is considered the most challenging for Indonesian learners due to issues such as anxiety, low self-confidence, and limited opportunities for authentic practice (Nety et al., 2020). Students often possess sufficient grammar and vocabulary knowledge but remain hesitant to express ideas verbally in English, especially in front of peers (Muamaroh & Prihartanti, 2013).

Teachers have long sought innovative techniques to overcome these challenges. One promising approach is Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), developed by Bandler and Grinder in the 1970s. NLP integrates psychology, linguistics, and communication strategies, emphasizing how language and mental patterns affect human behavior (Begum et al., 2022). In educational contexts, NLP provides techniques that can enhance learners' motivation, reduce anxiety, and improve communication skills (Rosemarin, 2016).

Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of NLP in language teaching. Haidir (2024) reported that the application of NLP techniques fostered a more dynamic and supportive learning environment, enabling students to feel more confident in using English. Likewise, Rahmawati and Nuryono (2014) found that NLP techniques helped reduce public speaking anxiety and enhanced learners’ confidence. In a similar vein, Rustan (2022) revealed that NLP can positively influence learners’ psychological states. Furthermore, Vaezi and Shahroosvand (2015) emphasized the role of sensory preferences in NLP. Despite these benefits, limited studies in Indonesia have explored teachers’ perceptions of the NLP implementation in EFL classroom, particularly in speaking instruction. Understanding how teachers view NLP is essential, as their beliefs and experiences shape its practical implementation.

Methods

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research method since it was found to be the most appropriate approach for answering the research objectives. When employing qualitative methods, the investigator utilized a case study design. Case studies are the most prevalent form of research in education, according to some authorities (J. Creswell, 2014; Gall et al., 2003; Scott & Morrison, 2006). Case study research, according to Yin (2013), is grounded in the constructivist paradigm of social construction of reality, which holds that truth is subjective and contingent on one’s perspective. Moreover, as stated by (J. W. Creswell & Poth, 2018), qualitative research provides a descriptive and narrative overview of the participants’ experiences in the natural environment.

Participants

The present study involved three English teachers who are certified Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) practitioners and have systematically integrated NLP techniques into the teaching of speaking skills. The participants were selected through the use of purposive sampling (Patton, 2002). Three institutions were purposefully selected as research sites: MAN 1 Polewali Mandar, MAN 2 Polewali Mandar, and SMA Islam Al-Akhyar Makassar. The selection was guided by several considerations: (1) the English teachers at these schools have completed formal NLP training, (2) some of them consistently apply NLP-based strategies in classroom practice, and (3) the researcher had obtained preliminary consent from the schools’ principals and English teachers to conduct the research related to the teachers’ perception towards the implementation of NLP in English language instruction. Data collection involved documentation, and in-depth interviews with teachers. To ensure rigor in participant selection, purposive sampling was employed (Patton, 2002),

Table 1: The Characteristics of the teachers

Participants	Gender (N)	Age range	Year of teaching English	Institutions
NLP trained English teachers at Senior High school	2 Females and 1 Male	28-39	6-17	MAN 1 Polewali Mandar, Man 2 Polewali Mandar and SMA Islam Al Akhyar Makassar

Data Collection

The research methodology employed in this study used interviews as the primary technique for data collection. Prior to conducting the study, the researcher sent a formal letter of consent to the school authorities to obtain permission to carry out the investigation. Interviews were conducted with English teachers who had implemented NLP techniques in their classrooms in order to gain deeper insights into their pedagogical perspectives and experiences. This approach was intended to generate comprehensive data that could enhance the understanding of NLP application in EFL speaking classrooms.

Data Analysis

The interview recordings were subjected to thematic analysis, following the guidelines provided by Clarke and Braun (2013). The initial stage of the analysis involved the coding process, during which the researchers carefully examined the transcripts multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of the material. This process enabled the identification of themes, sub-themes, and categories. Careful coding was essential due to the complex nature of qualitative data analysis, which allows for multiple interpretations of the collected data. To facilitate this process, the researchers employed NVivo software to perform both open and axial coding of the interview data. The analytical procedure ultimately focused on the development of meta-categories, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Categories and sub-categories of the teachers' perceptions.

Categories	Sub-Categories
Understanding	The way teachers understand NLP in relation to language, cognition, and behavior in teaching speaking
Attitudes	Teachers attitude toward the implementation NLP techniques in speaking classes
Experiences	Positive and negative experiences of implementing NLP techniques in speaking classes
Motives	The reasons why teachers implement NLP to overcome affective barriers and build students' confidence
Opinions	The teachers' opinions on how NLP enriches the teaching of speaking
Expectations	The expected improvement of students' confidence, fluency, and speaking performance

Results

Teachers' Understanding towards the implementation of Neuro-Linguistics Programming in teaching speaking

The data revealed that the three teachers demonstrated a solid understanding of NLP and its application in language teaching. Teacher 1 perceived NLP as a roadmap to understand how the mind works and how language can influence thoughts and actions highlighting that techniques such as pacing, modeling, and elicitation were already part of her teaching repertoire even before receiving formal NLP training. Teacher 2 similarly understood NLP as a tool to establish emotional connections with learners, emphasizing its role in building trust and confidence in the classroom. Teacher 3 viewed NLP as an approach that integrates language, cognition, and behavior. Through workshops and training, she became familiar with strategies such as anchoring, rapport building, and

reframing, which she found effective in enhancing participation and confidence in speaking activities

"Saya melihat NLP sebagai 'Peta Jalan' untuk memahami bagaimana pikiran bekerja, bagaimana bahasa dapat digunakan untuk memengaruhi pikiran serta Tindakan..." (Guru 1, wawancara 2024)"

"I understood NLP as a 'roadmap to understanding how the mind works and how language can influence thoughts and actions... (English Translation)"

"...NLP bagi saya adalah sebuah pendekatan untuk membangun koneksi emosional dengan peserta didik, khususnya dalam konteks pendidikan..." (Guru 2, wawancara 2024)

"...For me, NLP is an approach to building emotional connections with learners, especially in an educational context..." (English Translation)

"Neuro-Linguistic Programming, atau NLP, bagi saya adalah pendekatan yang mempelajari bagaimana bahasa, pikiran, dan perilaku manusia saling berhubungan." (Guru 3, wawancara 2025)

"For me, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, or NLP, is an approach that examines how language, thought, and human behavior are interconnected." (English Translation)

In summary, all three teachers demonstrated a clear understanding of NLP and its relevance to language teaching. While Teacher 1 perceived it as a roadmap for understanding thought and communication processes, Teacher 2 emphasized its role in building emotional connections and trust, and Teacher 3 highlighted its integration of language, cognition, and behavior. Despite different emphases, they shared a common belief that NLP provides practical strategies to enhance student participation, confidence, and speaking performance.

Teachers' Attitude towards the implementation of Neuro-Linguistics Programming in teaching speaking

Teachers 1 showed a positive perception towards the implementation of Neuro-Linguistics Programming (NLP) in their speaking classes. Teacher 1, who has practiced NLP techniques over the past two years, mentioned:

"Karena menurut saya teknik-teknik ini menyenangkan dan menghidupkan kelas, teknik-teknik ini juga membantu peserta didik merasa dipahami dan percaya diri untuk mengekspresikan diri..." (Guru 1, Wawancara 2024)

"I think these techniques are fun and enliven the class. They also help students feel understood and confident to express themselves..." (English Translation 2024)

She emphasized that techniques such as pacing, modeling, and elicitation have become part of her daily teaching routines. NLP, according to her, helps create a safe, engaging classroom that improves student participation. Meanwhile, Teacher 2, with four years of NLP application, stated:

"Karena NLP memberikan banyak alat bantu yang membantu siswa merasa didengar dan dipahami. Dan menurut saya itu penting dalam membangun kepercayaan diri mereka saat berbicara khususnya di kelas speaking ini." (Guru 2, Wawancara 2024)

"NLP provides many tools that help students feel heard and understood, which I think is important in building their confidence in speaking." (English Translation)

The teachers found NLP techniques particularly useful in reducing student anxiety, enhancing motivation, and making teaching more responsive and communicative. Their classroom practices include visualization, reframing negative beliefs, and emphasizing students' progress through constant praise and non-judgmental feedback. Despite the benefits, both teachers also noted certain constraints: time limitations, large class sizes, and cultural considerations in physical expression in Islamic school settings. However, they addressed these by adapting NLP strategies into verbal encouragement and student-centered scaffolding.

Teachers' Experience in Implementing NLP Techniques

The three teachers shared rich experiences in applying NLP techniques during their English speaking classes. Their experiences highlighted both the benefits and the challenges of integrating NLP strategies into real classroom practice. Teacher 1 had been practicing NLP for two years and described it as an inseparable part of her teaching routine. She reported:

"Saya secara rutin menggunakan teknik seperti pacing, modelling, dan elicitation dalam proses mengajar saya ... bagi saya ini sudah menjadi bagian dari cara saya mengajar." (Guru 1, Wawancara, 2024)

"I routinely use techniques such as pacing, modelling, and elicitation in my teaching process ... for me this has become part of the way I teach." (English Translation)

She found that NLP enriched her classes with interactive and engaging activities. For instance, she used elicitation to involve students actively, pacing to align with students' mood and energy, and modelling to provide clear examples. Although her experiences were positive, she also acknowledged challenges, particularly time constraints and large class sizes, which limited her ability to apply individualized NLP techniques to every student.

Teacher 2, with four years of experience implementing NLP, explained that NLP had transformed his teaching approach from teacher-centered lecturing to student-centered, interactive practices. She frequently employed visualization and positive suggestions, which she found effective in motivating students to overcome fear and express ideas:

"Saya sering gunakan teknik visualisasi dan positive suggestions. Saya mendorong mereka untuk membayangkan keberhasilan mereka sendiri ... dan saya juga aktif memberi contoh kalimat dan gesture yang bisa mereka tiru." (Guru 2, Wawancara, 2024)

"I often use visualization and positive suggestions. I encourage them to imagine their own success ... and I also actively provide example sentences and gestures they can imitate." (English Translation)

His experience showed that NLP not only enhanced students' confidence but also helped create a safe emotional environment in Islamic school settings, where physical gestures were adapted into verbal encouragement. However, she emphasized that NLP techniques require preparation and flexibility, especially in large classes.

Teacher 3 reported six years of teaching experience, during which she integrated NLP techniques such as anchoring, rapport building, reframing, and positive reinforcement. She consistently applied these strategies to support speaking activities, particularly role plays, storytelling, and group discussions. She reflected:

“Saya menggunakan teknik NLP secara konsisten ... strategi seperti anchoring, reframing, dan penggunaan bahasa sugestif saya terapkan pada sebagian besar pertemuan.” (Guru 3, Wawancara, 2025)

“I use NLP techniques consistently ... strategies such as anchoring, reframing, and the use of suggestive language I apply in most meetings.” (English Translation)

Her experience demonstrated how NLP helped her identify students’ diverse learning styles and adjust teaching strategies accordingly. She acknowledged challenges in time management and curriculum demands but resolved them by integrating NLP into existing activities rather than treating them as separate tasks.

In conclusion, the three teachers’ experiences illustrated that NLP techniques became an integral part of their teaching practice, enhancing student engagement, motivation, and confidence in speaking. Despite contextual challenges such as class size, cultural norms, and time constraints they adapted techniques to suit their classrooms. Collectively, their experiences indicate that NLP is not only feasible but also effective in transforming EFL speaking classes into supportive, interactive, and learner-centered environments

Teachers’ Motives for Implementing NLP in teaching speaking

The primary motives for implementing NLP were centered on overcoming affective barriers in speaking. Teacher 1 reported that she adopted NLP strategies to make learning more enjoyable and to reduce students’ anxiety about making mistakes. Teacher 2 explained that NLP provided her with strategies to ensure students felt “listened to and understood,” which she considered vital for building their confidence. Teacher 3 pointed out that many students’ challenges in speaking were related to low self-confidence rather than a lack of vocabulary, and she saw NLP as an effective way to address these barriers while also adapting to diverse learning styles.

“Karena menurut saya teknik-teknik ini menyenangkan dan menghidupkan kelas, teknik-teknik ini juga membantu peserta didik merasa dipahami dan percaya diri untuk mengekspresikan diri...” (Guru 1, Wawancara, 2024)

“Because I think these techniques are fun and enliven the class. They also help students feel understood and confident to express themselves...” (English Translation)

“Karena NLP memberikan banyak alat bantu yang membantu siswa merasa didengar dan dipahami. Dan menurut saya itu penting dalam membangun kepercayaan diri mereka saat berbicara khususnya di kelas speaking ini.” (Guru 2, Wawancara, 2024)

“Because NLP provides many tools that help students feel listened to and understood. I think this is important in building their confidence when speaking, especially in speaking classes.” (English Translation)

“Karena saya melihat siswa sering kesulitan berbicara bukan hanya karena kurang kosakata, tapi juga kurang percaya diri. Dengan NLP, saya bisa membantu mereka merasa lebih nyaman, termotivasi, dan berani mengekspresikan diri...” (Guru 3, Wawancara, 2025)

“Because I noticed that students often struggle with speaking not only due to limited vocabulary, but also because of low self-confidence. With NLP, I can help them feel more comfortable, motivated, and brave to express themselves...” (English Translation)

In conclusion, the three teachers shared common motives for implementing NLP in their speaking classes, all of which were centered on addressing affective challenges in language learning. Collectively, their motives underline that NLP is not only a teaching technique but also a means to empower learners emotionally, increase motivation, and foster confidence to actively participate in speaking.

Teachers' Opinions on implementing NLP in teaching speaking

The teachers shared the opinion that NLP enriches the process of teaching speaking by addressing both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning. Teacher 1 believed that NLP made lessons more responsive to students' real needs and enhanced their communication skills. Teacher 2 observed that NLP strategies helped shape a positive mindset toward English, motivating students to express themselves more freely. Teacher 3 emphasized NLP's holistic nature, arguing that it went beyond grammar and vocabulary to foster motivation, confidence, and emotional resilience. Their perspectives collectively demonstrate that NLP is perceived as a highly relevant and beneficial approach for EFL speaking classrooms.

"Ya, saya yakin penerapan teknik-teknik ini meningkatkan efektivitas pengajaran dan pengalaman belajar siswa. Kelas yang menyenangkan dan aman tentunya akan menjadi wadah belajar yang baik dan bermanfaat bagi siapapun." (Guru 1, Wawancara, 2024)

"Yes, I am convinced that the implementation of these techniques improves teaching effectiveness and students' learning experiences. A fun and safe class will certainly become a good and beneficial learning space for everyone." (English Translation)

"Sangat bermanfaat. NLP memberikan dimensi baru dalam membangun komunikasi dua arah antara guru dan siswa." (Guru 2, Wawancara, 2024)

"Very beneficial. NLP provides a new dimension in building two-way communication between teacher and students." (English Translation)

"...NLP memberikan pendekatan yang lebih holistik... tidak hanya berfokus pada aspek kognitif seperti grammar dan vocabulary, tetapi juga pada aspek afektif siswa seperti motivasi, kepercayaan diri, dan pengelolaan emosi." (Guru 3, Wawancara, 2025)

"... NLP provides a more holistic approach... not only focusing on cognitive aspects such as grammar and vocabulary, but also on affective aspects such as motivation, self-confidence, and emotional management." (English Translation)

In conclusion, the three teachers consistently expressed the view that NLP significantly enriches the teaching of speaking by addressing both the cognitive and affective dimensions of learning. Collectively, their opinions affirm that NLP is not only relevant but also highly beneficial for fostering effective and meaningful speaking instruction in EFL classrooms.

Teachers' Expectations towards the implementation of NLP

The teachers expressed optimistic expectations for the outcomes of NLP-based teaching. Teacher 1 hoped her students would "become more confident in speaking English and practice without fear of making mistakes." Teacher 2 envisioned that students would be "more open in sharing ideas, unafraid of errors, and able to see mistakes as part of their growth." Teacher 3 expected her students to achieve greater fluency and confidence, with the ability to use English effectively in daily communication. These

expectations highlight the teachers' belief that NLP has long-term potential to improve both the skill and the confidence of learners in speaking English.

"...Saya berharap siswa menjadi lebih percaya diri dalam berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris, saya ingin siswa saya bisa berlatih dengan rasa aman tanpa takut akan kesalahan dalam proses belajar." (Guru 1, Wawancara, 2024)

"...I hope students become more confident in speaking English. I want my students to be able to practice with a sense of safety without being afraid of mistakes during the learning process." (English Translation)

"Saya ingin siswa menjadi lebih terbuka dalam menyampaikan ide, tidak takut salah, dan merasa bahwa mereka bisa terus berkembang tanpa tekanan." (Guru 2, Wawancara, 2024)

"I want students to be more open in sharing ideas, not afraid of making mistakes, and to feel that they can continue to grow without pressure." (English Translation)

"Saya berharap siswa bisa berbicara bahasa Inggris dengan lebih lancar, percaya diri, dan mampu menggunakan bahasa tersebut dalam situasi sehari-hari." (Guru 3, Wawancara, 2025)

"I hope students can speak English more fluently, with confidence, and be able to use the language in everyday situations." (English Translation)

In conclusion, the teachers expressed optimistic expectations regarding the implementation of NLP techniques in speaking classes. They believed that NLP techniques could help students overcome fear, gain confidence, and practice speaking more naturally. Collectively, their expectations underline the long-term potential of NLP techniques to improve both the competence and confidence of EFL learners in speaking.

Discussion

This study explored English teachers' perceptions of implementing Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) in teaching speaking within Indonesian EFL classrooms. The findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a solid understanding of NLP, perceived it positively, and implemented it with motives centered on overcoming affective barriers such as anxiety and low self-confidence. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Haidir, 2024; Rahmawati & Nuryono, 2014; Rustan, 2022), which highlighted NLP's role in reducing students' speaking anxiety, enhancing motivation, and fostering active classroom participation.

Teachers in this study viewed NLP as a roadmap to understanding the interaction between language, thought, and behavior, emphasizing techniques such as pacing, modeling, anchoring, and rapport building. This aligns with Vaezi and Shahroosvand's (2015) assertion that NLP accommodates learners' sensory preferences and cognitive processes, which in turn fosters deeper engagement in communicative tasks. Furthermore, the positive attitudes demonstrated by teachers echo Rosemarin's (2016) claim that NLP provides educators with practical tools to enhance learner-centered teaching and strengthen classroom rapport. However, teachers in this research adapted NLP to the socio-cultural and religious context of Indonesian classrooms, particularly by limiting physical expression and replacing it with verbal scaffolding and encouragement. This adaptation underscores the contextual flexibility of NLP techniques.

The primary motives for implementing NLP were related to addressing affective barriers in speaking. Teachers consistently reported that students' struggles were less about linguistic competence (grammar or vocabulary) and more about psychological

barriers such as fear of mistakes, anxiety, and low self-confidence. These findings support Muamaroh and Prihartanti (2013), who argued that Indonesian learners often have sufficient language knowledge but hesitate to use it due to performance anxiety. NLP techniques such as reframing negative beliefs, anchoring positive emotions, and using visualization exercises provided teachers with effective strategies to help students overcome these barriers. Importantly, this study highlights that teachers did not merely employ NLP as a teaching technique but also as an emotional empowerment tool, thus broadening its pedagogical scope in the Indonesian EFL context.

The teachers' shared opinion that NLP enriches speaking instruction by integrating both cognitive and affective dimensions reflects the holistic nature of the approach. While traditional EFL instruction often emphasizes grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, NLP techniques place equal importance on building learners' confidence, motivation, and emotional resilience. This resonates with Begum et al. (2022), who suggested that NLP can bridge the gap between linguistic competence and communicative performance. The optimistic expectations expressed by the teachers, such as students becoming more confident, fluent, and willing to take risks in speaking, further indicate that NLP holds long-term potential to transform speaking classrooms into psychologically safe learning spaces.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) makes a significant contribution to teaching speaking in Indonesian EFL classrooms by addressing both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning. The participating teachers demonstrated a strong understanding of NLP and viewed its implementation positively, particularly through techniques such as pacing, anchoring, reframing, and visualization, which proved effective in reducing anxiety, enhancing confidence, and motivating students to participate actively. The findings further revealed that students' challenges in speaking were rooted more in psychological barriers than in linguistic limitations, and NLP provided practical strategies to overcome these issues. Moreover, teachers successfully adapted NLP techniques to align with the socio-cultural context of Islamic schools, underscoring the flexibility and relevance of the approach across diverse educational settings. Overall, the study affirms that NLP functions not merely as a teaching technique but as a holistic pedagogical framework that fosters psychologically safe, learner-centered environments with long-term potential to improve students' fluency, confidence, and meaningful engagement in speaking.

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