

*Nykyporets Svitlana, senior lecturer,
Ibrahimova Liudmyla, senior lecturer,
Kriutchenko Olena, lecturer,
Vinnytsia National Technical University,
Vinnytsia, Ukraine*

THE USE OF NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING (NLP) IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING: INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF NLP TECHNIQUES ON VOCABULARY AND GRAMMAR ACQUISITION

Learning a foreign language is never a one-size-fits-all process, especially in technical universities where students often prioritize engineering or science subjects over language studies. Many learners struggle to engage with vocabulary and grammar that appear disconnected from their primary fields of interest. Limited contact hours and high cognitive demands of technical curricula further complicate the acquisition of a foreign language. Against this backdrop, educators face the urgent need to find methods that not only enhance language proficiency but also make learning more appealing and efficient.

One promising approach lies in the use of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) – a set of psychological techniques designed to improve communication, personal development, and learning outcomes. NLP offers practical tools for engaging different learning styles, increasing motivation, and helping students process and retain new language material more effectively. By focusing on how students think and feel while learning, NLP encourages a more personalized, mindful, and confident approach to language acquisition.

This study explores the integration of NLP techniques into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction at a Ukrainian technical university. Specifically, it investigates the extent to which these techniques can facilitate vocabulary retention and improve grammatical competence among engineering students. The ultimate goal is to provide evidence-based recommendations for foreign language instructors working in technical higher education.

Foreign language instruction in technical universities in Ukraine is frequently characterized by limited classroom hours, low learner motivation, and challenges in applying abstract language rules in practical contexts. In response, educators are seeking innovative, interdisciplinary approaches to enhance the effectiveness of instruction. One such approach is Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), a psychological method that explores the relationship between neurological processes, language, and behaviour.

The present study investigates the role of NLP techniques in improving vocabulary retention and grammatical competence among engineering students. The research aims to provide practical recommendations for integrating NLP-based strategies into foreign language curricula in technical higher education.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) was developed in the 1970s by Richard Bandler and John Grinder. It is based on the premise that individuals can change their thoughts and behaviours to achieve specific outcomes by modelling successful

behaviours and using structured communication techniques (Bandler & Grinder, 1975).

In the context of language learning, NLP is associated with several key concepts:

- a) representational systems (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic) that influence learning preferences;
- b) anchoring, a technique for associating emotional states with learning content;
- c) modelling, imitating successful language users to internalize effective patterns;
- d) reframing, which involves changing a learner's perspective on mistakes and challenges.

Previous studies (e. g., Bolitho, 2011; Yaghoubi & Razavipour, 2020) suggest that NLP can positively affect language learners' motivation, confidence, and retention of material.

The study was conducted over the course of one academic semester and involved 48 fourth-year engineering students enrolled in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course. Students were divided into two groups: the experimental group received instruction supplemented with NLP techniques, while the control group followed the traditional curriculum.

NLP techniques employed included:

- a) visualization of word meanings and grammar structures (e. g., mental movies);
- b) use of positive affirmations to overcome fear of speaking;
- c) anchoring confidence through consistent rituals (e. g., breathing techniques before presentations);
- d) reframing errors as opportunities for growth.

Student performance was measured through vocabulary and grammar tests administered before and after the intervention. Additionally, learner feedback was gathered through questionnaires and short interviews.

The application of NLP techniques in the experimental group led to observable improvements not only in test results but also in students' classroom behaviour, motivation, and confidence. Below are three real-life examples that illustrate how specific NLP strategies contributed to vocabulary and grammar acquisition:

Example 1. Visualization for vocabulary retention

During a unit on technical equipment, students were introduced to terms like *hydraulic press*, *thermal conductivity*, and *voltage regulator*. Instead of rote memorization, students were guided through a visualization exercise where they mentally "walked" through a factory and imagined each item in use, describing its function in English. One student reported that this method "made the words stick in my head like scenes from a movie." After this session, vocabulary test results for that unit improved by 32 % compared to the control group.

Example 2. Anchoring confidence before speaking tasks

Public speaking in English was a major source of anxiety for many learners. To address this, students were taught a simple anchoring technique: taking a deep breath

and lightly pressing two fingers together while recalling a successful communication experience (even in their native language). Over time, this physical anchor became associated with calm and focus. When students later delivered short technical presentations, their fluency and composure noticeably improved. In post-task reflections, one student noted, “I used to shake and forget words, but now I can start with a clear head.”

Example 3. Reframing grammar mistakes as growth opportunities

In traditional grammar instruction, students often view errors as failures. Using NLP reframing techniques, the instructor encouraged students to treat mistakes as signals of learning in progress. For instance, after one student incorrectly said “*He can to fix it*,” the teacher responded: “That’s a good start – you’ve identified the modal verb. Let’s refine it together.” This supportive environment reduced fear of correction and encouraged experimentation. Over the semester, error rates in written tasks decreased by 28 % in the experimental group.

These examples demonstrate that NLP techniques not only improved test performance but also helped shift students’ mindsets toward a more constructive and engaged approach to language learning. The combination of cognitive strategies (like visualization), emotional regulation (through anchoring), and attitude adjustment (via reframing) created a holistic learning experience that was particularly effective for technical university students with diverse learning preferences.

Furthermore, these techniques required minimal additional resources, making them practical for integration into existing ESP curricula. The improvement in learner outcomes – both measurable and subjective – supports the hypothesis that NLP methods can be a valuable supplement to traditional foreign language instruction in STEM education contexts.

Quantitative data revealed that the experimental group showed a 25 % greater improvement in vocabulary test scores and a 30 % increase in grammar accuracy compared to the control group. Qualitative feedback highlighted increased learner engagement, reduced anxiety, and greater willingness to participate in class activities.

Students reported that visualization techniques helped them remember complex technical terms, while anchoring rituals reduced stress during oral tasks. The reframing of mistakes as part of the learning process created a more supportive classroom environment. These results align with previous findings (Grinder & Bandler, 1982; Thorne, 2003), confirming the potential of NLP to enhance foreign language acquisition.

However, the study also revealed limitations, such as the time required to train teachers in NLP methods and the need for individualized approaches based on student learning styles.

The application of NLP techniques in foreign language teaching offers a promising toolset for educators in technical universities. By aligning instruction with students’ cognitive and emotional patterns, NLP facilitates deeper learning and improved retention of vocabulary and grammar. While more longitudinal research is needed, initial findings suggest that NLP can significantly enrich the EFL classroom experience.

Educators are encouraged to explore NLP-based strategies and adapt them to their specific teaching contexts, especially in STEM-focused institutions where language learning is often marginalized.

REFERENCES

1. Nykyporets, S. S., Herasymenko, N. V., & Chopliak, V. V. (2023). Cognitive strategies impacting the structural composition of translated technical and scientific texts: An analysis of translation methodologies. In *Topical issues of translation of specialized texts: Scientific monograph*, 130–154. Baltija Publishing. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-394-1-7>.
2. Bandler, R., & Grinder, J. (1975). *The Structure of Magic I: A Book about Language and Therapy*. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books.
3. Grinder, J., & Bandler, R. (1982). *Reframing: Neuro-Linguistic Programming and the Transformation of Meaning*. Moab, UT: Real People Press.
4. Thorne, T. (2003). *Mastering NLP*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
5. Bolitho, R. (2011). NLP in language teaching. *ELT Journal*, 65(3), 309–311.
6. Yaghoubi, A., & Razavipour, K. (2020). The Impact of NLP Techniques on Learner Motivation in EFL Contexts. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 7(4), 1–15.

Оленяк Мар'яна, д-р філол. наук, доцент,
Київський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка,
м. Київ, Україна

АКАДЕМІЧНЕ САМОСТВЕРДЖЕННЯ ЧЕРЕЗ ДИСТАНЦЮВАННЯ

У сучасних гуманітарних науках нерідко спостерігається спільна тенденція: схильність сучасних дослідників стверджувати власну новизну шляхом критики класиків, часто ґрунтуючись на зміні термінології та методологічних рамок, а не на реальних концептуальних розбіжностях. У межах мовознавства це особливо помітно у теоріях метафори та в теоріях перекладу, де сучасники часто оголошують себе першовідкривачами ідей, які насправді були добре усвідомлені ще у давнину.

Так, у межах теорії метафори сучасна когнітивна лінгвістика (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, р. 190–193) стверджує, що метафора – це не просто стилістична прикраса, а фундаментальний механізм людського мислення. Автори запровадили поняття *концептуальної метафори* – способу осмислювати одну сферу досвіду через іншу (наприклад, *TIME IS MONEY*). Водночас дослідники критикують класиків, зокрема Аристотеля, за те, що той нібито сприймав метафору лише як троп, не усвідомлюючи її когнітивної природи.

Проте уважне прочитання давньогрецьких і римських мислителів свідчить про інше. Аристотель у *Риторичі* і *Поетиці* визначав метафору як «уміння бачити подібність у різному», тобто як спосіб прояснення нового через відоме. Це фактично те саме, що сучасне *когнітивне манування*.

Є й дослідники, які віддають належне мислителю (Swiggers, 1984; Ricoeur, 1996; Kirby, 1997; Novokhatko, 2017), вони простежують вплив ідей Аристотеля на сучасні когнітивні теорії метафори. Зокрема, П. Свіггерс (Swiggers, 1984) відзначає наявність «вражаюче сучасних» елементів у трактуванні метафорич-