

# Neuro-linguistic Programming, Teacher's Identity, and Teachers' Effectiveness

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**Abstract**—Education especially “teaching” is considered as a valuable profession through which future generations are generated and educated. In order to have a successful educational system, the main components of the system must work together. It is believed that teachers are active decision-makers of any educational system who can bring on success to the education, accounting for about 30 percent of the variance on pupils' achievement. Based on different studies, developing rapport, critical thinking, self-efficacy, establishing clear goals, effective interpersonal communication, and a supportive classroom climate are some of the main determinant factors the teachers' effectiveness. Among various variables which are related to teachers, identity is one of the important elements that affect teachers' performance. Neuro-linguistic programming, on the other hand, is considered as an approach which is claimed to help achieve excellence in performance and identity. It is also considered as a supplementary technique in teaching profession which helps the teachers to develop outstanding skills. In this article, the researcher defines the concept of teacher's identity as a key element effective in the teaching profession. Then some factors that have significant impact on teachers' effectiveness are taken into account. Also, the definition of neuro-linguistics programming, some of its characteristics, and its implications for developing teacher's identity and teacher's effectiveness are discussed.

**Index Terms**—neuro-linguistic programming, teacher's identity, teachers' effectiveness

## I. INTRODUCTION

In order to have a successful educational system, the main components of the educational system must work together. It is believed that teachers are active decision-makers of any educational system, and they have essential role in assigning classroom events (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992). Consequently, teachers can bring on success and achievement to the education (Suwandee, 1995). Teachers are professional educators who have decisive roles and their primary responsibility is to educate, teach, train, guide, and evaluate the learners. Supriya Heyneman & Loxley carried out a study in 1983 in 29 countries regarding the determinant factors of students' achievement. The findings showed that among different factors, one third is related to the teachers. Another research which was done by Sudjana concluded that 76.6 percent of the learning achievements of the students are affected by the performance of the teachers. According to his findings, 32.43 percent was related to the teaching ability of the teachers, 32.38 percent was related to mastery of content, and 8.60 percent was considered as the rate related to the teacher's attitude towards the subjects. What is evident from different studies is that teachers' performance is one of the key elements of the educational success; consequently, identifying the factors that contribute to the teachers' effectiveness is very important. There are many variables that are influential in this regard, including developing teacher's identity; and improving crucial skills like critical thinking, self-efficacy, creativity, rapport, accountability, and leadership.

As McKoen and Harrison (2010) declare, identity is a “self” which is culturally and socially shaped through the communication with the experiences we are gained in our lives. Identity is not fixed; it is dynamic and continually under construction. Identity construction is a lifelong continuum which is shaped through social interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Teacher's identity is also the result of relationship between personal experiences of teaching, understanding of the self, and social and occupational circumstances (Kreber, 2010). Scholars increasingly focus on the belief that teacher's identity is an integral and fundamental element of the teaching profession (Rodgers & Scott, 2008).

As Hattie (2012) suggests, teachers have the highest influence on students' achievement; as a result, we need to ensure that this influence is optimized to have strong positive effects on our learners (Hattie, 2003). Researchers have always tried to make a list of the features of an effective teacher, and they have conducted many researches in this direction. As an example, Hay McBer (2000, as cited in Anderson, 2004) has refereed to some of the characteristics of an effective teacher. They are professionalism, critical thinking, expectations for improvement, and leadership. Burden and Byrd (2007, as cited in Hunt, Wiseman, and Touzel, 2009) have another classification in which knowledge, skills, and dispositions are considered as the key elements of teacher's effectiveness.

There are also different studies that have concentrated on the potential effects of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) on different aspects of educational success. Based on John Grinder and Richard Bandler (1970s), as originators of neuro-linguistic programming, NLP is a theory of excellence identification, then modelling the identified patterns for others to gain the same results. As a matter of fact, NLP is based on the premise that excellence is teachable and everyone has the potential to learn it and achieve the similar results and become an outstanding performer. Pilgrims (2005), as an example, claims that NLP is an effective tool for developing rapport, setting clear educational goals, improving effectiveness and communication. Generally, NLP is a communication model, and it covers all aspects of communicating. That is the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and identity challenges that govern the learning process itself. NLP is all about language and learning, so it is highly applicable for a language teacher. As a whole, NLP has started with a strong concentration on personal and developmental growth; consequently it is applicable for variety of fields like education and it leads to desirable outcomes (Bandler and Grinder, 1975).

Based on the significance of teacher's identity and effectiveness, and the implications of neuro-linguistic programming in the field of education and their potential impacts on teachers' trend to become more successful, professional and effective, the present study discusses each concept separately, and then takes into account the implications of neuro-linguistic programming for teacher's identity and teacher's effectiveness.

## II. NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) was developed by John Grinder and Richard Bandler in the early 1970s as a new method to language teaching. In that era, Grinder and Bandler studied the patterns and beliefs of people who had excellent behavior (Revell & Norman, 1997). These scholars believe that neurological processes (N), language (L) and behavioral patterns learned through experience (P) are interconnected, and it is possible to change them in order to reach specific goals in life. Generally speaking, NLP is based on some predispositions about the way our mind works and the way people act and interact. It portrays human being as a whole mind-body system and acts as an interpersonal communication system which studied and combines three crucial areas: Neuro, Linguistics and Programming. 'Neuro' reflects the neurological processes (or how the body and mind interact). In other words, it relates to the way you use senses to understand things and happenings around. Second element which is 'Linguistics' stands for thought patterns and the language which is used in interpersonal communication. In other words, it refers to the way you use language and how it influences you and those around. The last part, 'Programming', shows the way we train the mind by analyzing the patterns of human behavior and language use to improve attention and reach specific objectives. If we put it in another way, it reflects the way you organize ideas and actions which produce expected and unexpected results. Neuro-linguistic programming studies brilliance and quality. In other words, it studies the way outstanding people and organizations reach to their ideal outcomes. As Siddiqui (2018) points out, adopting the techniques of NLP helps the instructors to analyze the kind of language that used by the learners and be aware of the thought process of them. In this way, instructors can change thoughts and actions of their learners and achieve the desirable outcomes.

NLP, as its originators suggest, is 'the psychology of excellence' and it is based on the premise that excellence is teachable to everybody. Originators of this theory, Richard Bandler and John Grinder, assert that NLP is an art and science of excellence. They started to work on the question that what makes some people to do the affairs in the excellent way, whereas, others do not. Their aim was to find out what makes 'outstanding performers' outstanding. When people learn it, they become an outstanding performer, no matter what his past was and what his trade now is (Lady, 2007). Joanne Walter and Ardeshir Bayat call it "a process that can be applied to model excellence in any field" (Walter, Bayat, 2003). It could be a doctor speaking with her patients, a teacher interacting with her students, a judge having communication with lawyers, a policeman working on a file and talking with a suspect, an army officer commanding his soldiers, a business executive, a coach trying to guide the players, and so many other examples. NLP is a tool that can help all of them to reach their desired goals by creating an effective communication. The list is very long and encompasses everybody who tries to engage the phenomenon of communication. As a matter of fact, discovering the mystery of excellence was the main driver of the NLP pioneers to conduct related studies. The proponents of NLP do believe that excellence is not a natural talent. Instead, they assume natural talent "a label than an explanation" (Walter and Bayat, 2003). They claim that excellence is not something rare and anybody can be loaded with this important property. To this end, what is required is that we become free from any limitations that we pose to ourselves and consider more choices.

NLP is also regarded as a supplementary tool in the field of second language instruction which helps learners to achieve excellence in their performances. It is developed from the combination of "neuro", "linguistic" and "programming" which refers to the connection of nerve network of body, their connection and reflection in language use, and finally the way this connection affects behavior. When we understand the process of HOW, we do something and we can REPEAT the same process to achieve the same result or we can CHANGE the process (or even just change a part of the process) to achieve a different result. While changing the process is known as behavioral change, repeating the process of how someone does something is known as modeling. The idea of modeling is applied for achieving the same result and become successful in life (If one can achieve a goal, so all others can use the same strategy and achieve the same). This rule is applicable even to educational fields.

NLP can also be considered with strategic perspectives. In the UK, there are some courses that are conducted for ESL teachers (teachers who teach English as a second language) who want to use NLP in their profession. Topics of this course encompass effective communication, rapport building, recognizing different learning styles and working with them, information gathering, improving effectiveness, and setting goals (Pilgrims, 2005) cited by Winch (2005). It is believed that NLP encourages language teachers to deliver the teaching programs more effectively and even apply more teaching styles in their professions (Tompkins and Baker, 2005) cited by Winch (2005). Revell and Norman (1997) point to 13 presuppositions that are helpful for the application of NLP in the field of language teaching and learning and other fields. The whole idea is that these principles should be a part of the teachers' belief system and shape the way instruction is done, no matter which teaching method is used by the teacher:

1. Mind and body are interconnected: Both of them are components of the same system, and each of them affects the other one.
2. The map is not the territory: All of us have special maps of the world which are different from each other.
3. There is no failure, only feedback: Failure is nonsense, and there is always a second chance to be successful.
4. The map becomes the territory: When you believe in something to be true, it is either true or becomes true.
5. When you know what exactly you want, it helps you get it.
6. The resources which are required to achieve our goals are all within us.
7. Communication is verbal and also nonverbal.
8. The nonconscious mind is kind.
9. Communication is conscious and also nonconscious.
10. There is a positive intention behind each behavior.
11. The response I get is the meaning of my communication.
12. To reach excellence, the excellent behavior should be modelled.
13. In any system, the element which has the highest flexibility will be more influential and has the greatest influence on the whole system.

Neuro-linguistic programming has four pillars which are very effective for improving the behavior and communication skill of the learner. As a matter of fact, NLP was initially developed by Bandler and Grinder in order to improve the communication skill. There are some strategies and techniques in this regard which empowers teachers and students to have more effective goal-oriented communications. As Siddiqui (2018) asserts, neuro-linguistic programming is based on neurology and communication. It is also based on the premise that each learner has a specific perceptual preferences and styles of learning. Accordingly, teachers can apply NLP strategies to develop these preferences and styles to provide optimum learning solutions. Additionally, there are some key concepts in NLP, including rapport building, modelling, mirroring, and anchoring. Anchoring in neuro-linguistic programming means using "triggers" or "anchors" in order to provide the learners with a positive mental image. When positive images are created, learners become motivated and gain positive attitude towards learning. Consequently, mental images help the learners to gain positive emotions by some body movements and gestures or specific expressions. These anchors enable the learners to become confident in the learning process. As Siddiqui (2018) asserts, mirroring is the other key concept which is taken into account in neuro-linguistic programming. Mirroring is a technique used in NLP to improve communication. NLP mirrors the learners' gestures, expressions, patterns of breathing, weight fluctuations, and alike to create rapport. It is believed that these patterns should be used in the classroom setting to improve verbal and non-verbal communication. Modelling and mirroring the patterns of the individuals who have a desirable academic performance will help the other learners to have the similar performance in the exams and achieve the similar results.

### III. PILLARS OF NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING

NLP has got four pillars (O'Connor and McDermott 1996; Revell and Norman 1997). These four key principles are:

1. Rapport: The Oxford dictionary defines rapport as "a close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well." As Delbio and Ilankumaran (2018) point out, the key pillars of neuro-linguistic programming are creating effective communication and relationship with others and it is believed that rapport is essential for effective communication, as it maximizes the similarities and minimizes the differences between individuals. Rapport is an unconscious empathy which is shaped between individuals. As asserted by Silva (2017), rapport or empathy is created by the strategies of neuro-linguistic programming in order to make a closer relationship between teacher and student, and therefore, in order to provide a more supportive and productive learning environment which leads to higher productivity and success. As a matter of fact, we are not alone and we live in societies in which there are also other people, therefore, we must gain the ability to generate rapport and create effective communication. In other words, shaping such skill is a 'must'. Rapport means having communication and relationship with the quality of mutual trust and responsiveness. The first pillar of neuro-linguistic programming is rapport which should be built within an individual and then with others. If we put it in another way, as a principle, it is asserted as "establish rapport with yourself and then with others."
2. Outcome thinking: This pillar relates to the goals and ends. It means that we should set our goals and know what we want. It is believed that the key to success is precision. The more precise you know what you want and the reason you want it, the more likely you will reach exactly to what you desired. In another words, based on NLP, knowing precisely

what you want helps you achieve it. If we put it in another way as a principle, it can be asserted as “know what you want.” There are five steps in this regards:

- Appreciate your goal, consider it as an attractive one, and make it as compelling as possible.
- Concentrate on your goal all day long, and set your brain on a path which ends to your objective. In this way, you will get through it much easier.
- Imagine that you have already achieved your goal. You should visualize the image completely, and after that you should walk back and try out the pathway which ends to your goal.
- Notice all the steps throughout this pathway. You should pay attention to all steps on the pathway towards the goal, such as all the resources, actions, and all the people that step-by-step help you to get to the goal.
- Step back to the present with a new perspective on the steps and take action to reach the goal.

Generally speaking, NLP is an outcome orientated discipline. That means whatever we do we must have a clear objective or goal. In order to achieve a successful outcome one must first define the outcome and be clear on what it is. Outcome orientation is also about setting direction. A positive direction rather than a negative one. NLP acknowledges that negatively stated outcomes are ill-formed and more likely to get you more of the thing you don't want. For example, it is harder to give up smoking when your intention is to “Not smoke cigarettes.” This outcome focuses you on smoking cigarettes so the chances are you will smoke more. It is a much better outcome to aim for good health, or to save more money and to give up cigarettes.

3. Sensory awareness: It refers to using senses in order to experience the world. In other words, it means that we use our senses to look, listen to, and feel what is happening to us. Based on NLP, when we use our senses we get the required feedback to adjust our attempts towards reaching objectives. In this case, we should notice others' communications consciously and nonverbally.

Sensory acuity or awareness means using your senses and being aware of what is going on both in yourself and the environment around you. It is a key to success to be aware of what is working and what is not. People often used to do things without paying attention to what works and what does not. When people make efforts to reach their goals, they must also develop a level of awareness that enables them to distinguish between what is working (which helps them to reach the desired outcome) and what is not.

4. Behavioral flexibility: It means to be adoptable in the entire situation. It means that we must should have various choices of action. The more choices we have, the more chances of success. If we don't change the way things are done, we won't get to different outcomes and what we get will be the same as before. According to this pillar of NLP, we must change the way we do things until we get what we want. If we put it in another way, we should say that when something we do is not working, then we must change our behavior to get a different result. Therefore, we must have different skills to act in a different way when it is necessary. This can be asserted in another way, as “keep changing what you do until you get what you want.” There is a rule in the science of Cybernetics that says that “in any system, the part with the greatest range of freedom will be the one controlling the system.” Consequently, when we see that current behavior doesn't work well, we should have the required flexibility and various skills to act in another way and change the result. As a matter of fact, neuro-linguistic programming encourages people to be flexible or adoptable in different situations. It also focuses that people should be flexible and accept the changes in their lives.

As NLP is a communication model, it covers all aspects of communicating. That is the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and identity challenges that govern the learning process itself. NLP is all about language and learning, so it is highly applicable for a language teacher. One of the important aspects related to the teachers and their effectiveness is teacher's identity which will be discussed in the next section.

#### IV. TEACHER'S IDENTITY

Identity has always been a critical concept in the social and cultural fields. Danielewicz (2001) describes identity as a way we understand that who we are and who other people are. Accordingly, it is also the way other people visualize themselves and others (including us). Identity is changeable and it is not a fixed concept; it is changeable and successively under construction. Danielewicz (2001) puts it in this way that “Every person is composed of multiple, often conflicting, identities, which exist in volatile states of construction or reconstruction, reformation or erosion, addition or expansion” (p. 10).

The present article has taken into account the type of identity which is related to the teachers in the educational context. Scholars claim that one of the key elements in the teaching profession is teacher's identity (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Identity construction is a continuous process which encompasses interpretation and reinterpretation of teacher's self-perception; it includes the person's understanding about who she or he is and will become (Beijaard et al., 2004). Danielewicz (2001) writes, “I regard ‘becoming a teacher’ as an identity forming process whereby individuals define themselves and are viewed by others as teachers” (p. 4). Varghese et al. (2005), especially in the field of language teaching, assert that “In order to understand language teaching and learning we need to understand teachers: the professional, cultural, political and individual identities which they claim or which are assigned to them” (p. 22). Actually, processes of identity formation are related to the discourses and the communities that we live and work within.

To gain knowledge about how to become an effective teacher needs passing through a long and complex way. Different theoretical approaches to teacher's identity do exist; some concentrate on its social and cultural nature, while

others concentrate on its discursive and narrative nature. However, many of these day's approaches assert that identity is socially embedded phenomenon, and this concept is ever-changing and dynamic (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Teacher's identity is not constructed in a vacuum, and it is developed in a social and cultural context (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). As different studies point out, one of the influential strategies for teacher's identity development is neuro-linguistic programming. Whereas effective communication is one of the key components of NLP, establishing a positive relationship is fundamental for teacher's identity development. As it was mentioned in the previous section, rapport is one of the main pillars of NLP. Consequently, it can be used as a tool for teachers. If education is essential to a high-quality future, the key is in the hands of the teachers. Providing learners with excellent skills needs effective teachers, and employing the tools of neuro-linguistic programming may help teachers to be effective in the teaching profession and become successful.

#### V. NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING AND TEACHER'S IDENTITY

In recent years, different researches has been allocated to investigating the teachers and their growth, professional identity, teachers' notions and perspectives, teachers' narratives, and biographies (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Research findings show that teacher's identity is highly connected with various concepts including self-confidence, inspiration, flexibility, self-efficacy, and commitment (Danielewicz, 2001). Different studies have concentrated on the importance of teachers' identity and its effect on the teachers' professional development (Eick & Reed, 2002) and many researches have concluded that NLP is regarded is an effective tool for personal and educational development (e.g. Tosey, 2010 and Tarnopolsky, 2016).

Since teachers educate and generate the future generations, teaching is highly regarded as a valuable profession. In order to have a successful educational system, the main components of the educational system must work together. It is believed that teachers are active decision-makers of any educational system, and they have essential role in assigning classroom events (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992), and can bring on success and achievement to the education (Suwandee, 1995). Generally, identity has been defined as a "self" which is shaped in society and in relation to the culture, through life's experiences and the communications about these experiences (McKeon and Harrison 2010). Identity is a lifelong learning process which is developed via social relations and processes (Berger and Luckmann 1991). Correspondingly, identity is shaped through the interplay between personal theories of teaching, notions about self and social and occupational contexts (Kreber 2010). So, one of the important factors is communication and as it was suggested it is one of the influential factors that affect identity. As Tarnopolsky (2016) also claims, communication is one of the most crucial elements for teachers and teaching profession as a whole, especially the communication between teachers and learners. Mutual communication between teacher and students in the classroom and also between each individual student may be considered as an important factor. Consequently, to create a good relationship, there should be a harmony between the teacher's manner of teaching and student's needs, wants, and wishes (either conscious or subconscious). To create such harmonization, nothing is helpful but establishing the optimum rapport between the teacher and every individual student in the classroom. Accordingly, there should be some algorithms, and some patterns of behavior and reaction for the teachers to facilitate rapport building. As Tarnopolsky (2016) claims, NLP provides these algorithms and patterns and can be beneficial in this regard. As it is shown by different findings, NLP is one of the most useful instruments that can be used for establishing rapport in classroom relationships and interactions, especially those in the EFL/ESL classroom. Teachers should advise students about notions, ideas, and ways of doing things and also the necessity and importance of doing them. In this way, the teacher has the opportunity to lead students in the required direction. But, one important point is that although teachers should advise students and instill the ideas and notions, these ideas should not be imposed or forced to them. This point is one of the main aspects of rapport building in NLP. In this manner, the feeling of manipulation is not created by the students and the feeling of being facilitated begins to shape. This feeling is the result of either acceptance of what is suggested by the teacher or is because students have become convinced that the proposed course of action is the best for them.

As Tolsey (2010) asserts, one of the issues which is concentrated in NLP courses is the potential for self-determination. Bandler and Grinder (1975), as the originators of NLP, emphasize that self-determination is quite possible by overcoming learnt self-limitation and finally leads to personal development. There is another important element that should be taken into account. It is teacher's self-control, which means that teacher is capable of controlling his or her feelings, moods, attitudes and their manifestations in behavior. The teacher is a human being who like any other person has his own problems, undesirable moments, anger, fatigue or frustration, and such unwanted feelings. Experienced teachers are capable of controlling these sensations in a way that their feelings don't affect others and don't influence the teaching quality. They also try to control themselves to save the rapport which is built between themselves and the students. But, the situation may be problematic for young teachers who don't have the sufficient experience for controlling their feelings. These beginners need more time to deal with NLP strategies to overcome the problem. They need sympathy and also empathy with learners; they should know more about the roots of their negative feelings (like anxiety, unconscious reactions, stress, and so on) to get prepared for the remedy. NLP and Suggestology, as Tarnopolsky (2016) points out, can help the teachers through the way, but it is not simple and instructors should gain a good working knowledge of this approach. Generally, as Tarnopolsky (2016) concluded, learning NLP and

Suggestology enables teachers to create a good relationship with the learners which leads to an improvement to teachers' identity and satisfaction.

Based on Lankveld, et al. (2016) point of view, four contextual factors inhibit or facilitate teacher's identity development. They are direct work environment, the wider context of higher education, relationship and interaction with students, and finally, staff development activities. Based on their researches, the first contextual factor can act as a facilitator or inhibitor, while the second one has a constraining effect. Regarding the last two contextual factors they concluded that they are facilitator and help the teachers in the process of identity development. As a matter of fact, when the working environment is supportive, teachers get a better feeling and do their responsibilities in a more productive way. Again, NLP paves the way to this end.

Another influential element which affects the identity is critical thinking (Nosratinia & Zaker, 2017; Yuksel, & Alci, 2012). Kurfiss (1988) describes critical thinking as "the ability to make sound judgments in complex, real-world situations, based on available evidence and a clearly worked out value system" (p. 6). Paul (1990) also clarifies critical thinking as a "disciplined, self-directed thinking that demonstrates the perfections of thinking which is appropriate to a specific domain or mode of thought" (p. 9).

Promoting higher-order thinking skills including critical thinking is a must for both teachers and learners (Oxford, 2001). It is obvious that teachers should first gain this essential skill to be able to help students to become critical thinker. Critical thinking demands teachers to engage in rational and logical thinking which is essential for the success in their profession (Korthagen, 1993). Ku (2009) also asserts that "besides the ability to engage in cognitive skills, a critical thinker must also have a strong intention to recognize the importance of good thinking and have the initiative to seek better judgment" (p. 71). As suggested by Sheybani and Miri (2019), critical thinking skills are not inherent, instead they are essential skills that are developed and improved by practice over time. One of the strategies that may help teachers to improve this ability is using NLP and practicing it continuously (Hosseinzadeh & Baradaran, 2015). As an example, in a study done by Sheybani and Miri (2019), researchers used a questionnaire containing 38 items to examine the effectiveness of NLP for developing critical thinking skill of the teachers and they concluded that the program is useful for this end.

Self-efficacy is another characteristic that affects identity. Self-efficacy was first suggested by Bandura (1995), which refers to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 2). Teacher efficacy, on the other hand, is defined as "The teacher's belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplishing a specific teaching task in a particular context" (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998, p. 22). Teacher efficacy is regarded as the effect of belief that the instructors have pertaining to their competence to educate students professionally and fruitfully (Bandura, 1997). This competence refers to the extent to which instructors believe that they are capable of rearranging and influencing the situation and students behavior and changing the outcomes (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Bandura (1997) believes that this capability help teachers to improve their identity and as a result increase the quality of teaching profession. Again different researches like the one which is done by Sheybani and Miri (2019) shows that NLP can be an effective program to promote self-efficacy. They also concluded that higher use of critical thinking skills leads to higher levels of self-efficacy, so these two characteristics are interrelated. It can be believed that the knowledge and awareness of NLP is necessary for improving sense of efficacy. It means that teachers should enhance their knowledge of NLP to gain the higher levels of self-efficacy (Sheybani & Miri, 2019). Consequently, teachers must be aware of the positive effects of neuro-linguistic programming and do their best to improve it in order to become successful teachers.

## VI. TEACHER'S EFFECTIVENESS

One of the crucial activities of human being is education. As it is suggested by Anderson (2004), in order to have a professional growth and economic progress it is necessary to invest in education. Accordingly, it should be taken into account that the key to educational success is in the hands its facilitators, the teachers, as they are the most important players of the field (Rao & Kumar, 2004) and they are the ones responsible for providing the requires basis of success (David & Macayan, 2010, p. 74). Teachers influence the whole educational process and even affect students' lives. As suggested by Hunt (2009), up to 30 percent of the variance in the test scores may be attributed to teachers. Tan de-Ramos (2011) relates this impact to the idea that teaching is a special skill that needs expertise in the related academic field and also it requires a suitable environment for optimal learning. So it is necessary for the teachers to do the best in their profession and to be always effective.

At first, it would be better to clarify what it means to be an effective teacher. According to Hunt (2009), it includes features, behaviors, and abilities that make teachers competent in providing the required situation for students' desired outcomes. Effectiveness of the teachers is very important, as effective teachers help the students to reach to their goals, and gain important skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and finally becoming effective citizens. Effective teachers also affect the lives of their students even outside the school walls. They train students who love always learning and belief in themselves all the time (TEMM, 2012). Calaguas (2012) also points to some features which are related to effective teachers. They are personality (e.g. being kind, active, reflective, and enthusiastic), subject matter expertise (e.g. being knowledgeable of subject matter and delivering well-prepared lesson), relational competence with student (for instance, having the ability to establish rapport with students and believing in them),

professional competence (e.g. being dedicated to work and having a sense of integrity), teaching style (for example, explaining complicated material in an understandable way, being student-centered, and encouraging discussion), and classroom management (maintaining discipline, creating positive environment, and so on).

As being an effective teacher is very important and influential in educational success, there have been numerous researches that have tried to prepare a list of the characteristics for effective teacher. Hay McBer (2000), points to professionalism, reasoning, expectation for improvement, and leadership as the four important clusters of effective teachers' classification. On the other hand, Burden and Byrd (2007) suggest another classification which encompasses knowledge, skills and dispositions. In this classification, knowledge includes the professional and pedagogical ones, while skills refer to the abilities to use the knowledge in an efficient way. Dispositions also include beliefs, attitudes, values, and commitment.

Self-efficacy, critical thinking, rapport, creating supportive climate, are also determinant factors of teacher's effectiveness which can be developed by the help of neuro-linguistic programming techniques.

## VII. NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING AND TEACHER'S EFFECTIVENESS

As it was discussed, education is one of the noble human activities, and preparation of superior human resources is necessary for starting a good education process. Teachers are the most influential resource in achieving the educational goals so it is necessary to have effective teachers to help students reach their desired outcomes. There are many factors that enable teachers to do their best and NLP is believed to be a very useful tool in this regard. Neuro-linguistic programming provides strategies and solution to the problems related to teaching and learning. It also motivates and engages students and enables teachers to develop the required characteristics necessary for effective teaching (Gewasari, Manullang, and Sibuea, 2017).

As mentioned, Self-efficacy is one of the constructs related to teachers' beliefs which affect their accomplishments (Ashton, 1984; Tavares et al., 2003, as cited in Castelo-Branco, 2006). Self-efficacy is a fundamental human conduct which is considered as a determining behavior. It is believed that when a person believes in achieving the desired result, it is more probable that the related behavior be repeated again (Canrinus, Lorenz, Beijgaard, Buitink, & Hofman, 2011). It is also claimed that when someone believes in himself or herself and develops self-perceptions of capabilities, s/he will create the required path to reach the desired outcomes.

Teachers' sense of self-efficacy comprises of two components (Ashton, 1984). One component is cognitive which has two aspects: First, the likelihood that teachers can make constructive changes in students, and second, teachers' self-assessments regarding their abilities to make these changes (Denham & Michael, 1981, as cited in Castelo-Branco, 2006). The other component which is affective is related to the sense of shame or pride which is aligned with the sense of efficacy (Denham & Michael, 1981, as cited in Castelo-Branco, 2006). Various findings show that teachers with high self-efficacy have students who do better on standardized achievement tests than their peers who have instructors with low self-efficacy beliefs (Moore & Esselman, 1992; Anderson et al., 1988; Watson, 1991; Bamburg, 1994, as cited in Muijs & Reynolds, 2011). Consequently, one of the influential factors in teachers' effectiveness is teachers' sense of self-efficacy which is concentrated in neuro-linguistic programming (Muijs & Reynolds, 2011). Shahmoradi, Nosratinia, and Shangarffam (2018) have done a research to determine whether there is a relationship between NLP and teachers' sense of self-efficacy by applying the English version of Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) and they have concluded that there is a strong and positive correlation between NLP and self-efficacy of the teachers.

Another important factor related to teacher's effectiveness is classroom climate. Teachers' effectiveness is dependent upon students' achievements, so they should create a supporting climate in the classroom which promotes learners' success (Hunt et al., 2009). In this regard, one of the issues that has been concentrated by Alton-Lee (1993, pp. 82-83, as cited in Anderson, 2004) is culture. It is argued that teacher must attend to the classroom culture to make important questions regarding both the learning and the well-being in classrooms visible. Muijs and Reynolds (2011) point to various studies and meta-analysis which have concluded that classroom climate is an important element in students' achievement (Mortimore et al., 1988; Brophy & Good, 1986; Rosenshine, 1979), self-confidence (Fraser, 1994), high level of participation (Cotton, 1997), and low level of victimization (Shechtman, 2002). Byer (2000) claims that there is a positive relationship between learners' perceptions of classroom climate and their learning achievements (Fisher & Fraser, 1983; Martin-Reynolds & Reynolds, 1983; Moos, 1979; Trickett & Moss, 1974);, social attitude (Fouts, 1987; Fouts, Chan, & Biao, 1993), motivation (Knight & Waxman, 1990; Zevin, 1983), and self-confidence (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1992).

In general, developing a safe and supporting classroom environment helps students to promote confidence and get ready for any practice towards educational success. Consequently, teachers should concentrate on this important factor to have an effective teaching process (Comenius, 2009). Again, it is one of the main concerns of neuro-linguistic programming and teachers can apply its strategies to reach to this end.

Feedback is another determinant factor of teacher's effectiveness as it affects the students' achievement. Hattie (2009) has done a meta-analysis to see the most important and influential factors of students' achievement and have concluded that one of the most essential factors is feedback. Hattie's meta-analysis of 13,209 studies have reached to the conclusion the effect size of 0.81 is the product of feedback from teachers and/or students. Marzano has done another meta-analysis of 488 studies to determine the effect size related to the students who have received feedback on the

processes of accomplishing a specific task and the result has been 0.74 (Petty, 2009). Consequently, feedback is crucial for learning and achievement, but it should be considered that its influence can be either positive or negative; it means that the type of feedback which is chosen by the teacher and the way of its delivery is also important and determines its effectiveness (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). In fact, research shows considerable variability on feedback effect-sizes, which indicates that some types are more powerful than others (Hattie, 2009). For example, it is believed that providing cues or reinforcement is more powerful than punishment or extrinsic rewards (Hattie, 2009).

As it is asserted by Shahmoradi, Nosratinia, and Shangarffam (2018), another important factor is critical thinking which can be considered as an educational priority and should be developed by teachers and students in order to be effective in the educational process. Teachers can use the techniques of neuro-linguistic programming continuously in the formal and informal teaching situations to develop and improve this reflective skill in order to be effective in their profession. In a study which is done by Shahmoradi, Nosratinia, and Shangarffam (2018), the relationship between NLP and teachers' critical thinking is examined by the English version of Honey's Critical Thinking Questionnaire (2000), and the result shows that there is a significant relationship between NLP and critical thinking of the teachers which is an influential factor in their effectiveness.

Delbio and Ilankumaran (2018) also point to some techniques of NLP that can be used by teachers for teaching language more effectively. These techniques include anchoring, visualization, modelling rapport, and state management. It is believed that the mentioned techniques have significant effect on the effectiveness of the language teachers, so teachers should practice NLP techniques continuously to achieve the desired outcomes. The other method which is used in NLP is dictation that improves spelling of the students, so teachers can apply this method to train learners more effectively. In this manner, teacher reads a sentence and learner writes it down. If there is any mistake, teacher corrects it and asks the student to rewrite the passage in the correct form. When teachers try to teach short stories, they play a movie instead of the old fashions to improve the visual sense of the learners. Again, for pronunciation and intonation, there are new techniques in NLP. Teacher plays some speeches again and again to improve learners' skills (Delbio and Ilankumaran, 2018).

Reflective teaching is another fundamental concept which improves the effectiveness of the teachers. It is one of the features which were concentrated by the pioneers of modern education including John Dewey, and it refers to the process of mirroring the environment without any judgment or in a critical manner, in order to make decision (Millroad, 2004). Schon (1996) defines reflection as the way in which people handle the problems during practice. In a study done by Marashi and Abedi (2017), the effect of NLP on reflective teaching is evaluated by a questionnaire developed by Akbari, Behzadpour, and Dadvand (2010). Research findings show that the NLP techniques used in the study have had significant impact on the reflective level of the participating teachers. Consequently, again teachers can apply neuro-linguistic programming strategies to improve their effectiveness.

Based on various researches, there are many other areas that can be improved by NLP and increase the effectiveness of the teachers. NLP gives teachers and pupils a tool to change unproductive learning habits and consequently improve learning and reach success. Teachers can apply NLP strategies to teach different skills (e.g. spelling and speaking), promote noble competencies (e.g. critical thinking, self-esteem and self-efficacy), or remove barriers (e.g. anxiety and stress) more effectively, or develop and improve higher order abilities of themselves and consequently affect educational outcomes.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Neuro-linguistic programming is a tool which has potential for almost all professions of life, especially where the priority is communication. NLP is a humanistic training philosophy which provides different strategies and techniques used to achieve excellence in identity, beliefs, skills, competencies, etc. As it is asserted by different researchers, NLP can be practical and useful for teachers in terms of improving identity and teaching effectiveness. Consequently, teachers should improve their knowledge of the NLP and practice different programs that do exist to become competent in this regard. Vieira and Gaspar (2013), for instance, have planned an NPL teachers' successive education course, including 25 hours presential learning course and 25 hours of autonomous work. The course involves knowledge, intrapersonal skills, and interpersonal skills, with different activities such as rapid relaxation techniques, excellence circle, Milton model, Mind map, modalities, and neurological levels alignment. Neuro-linguistic programming techniques and strategies would certainly help contemporary teacher to improve their professional identity and become more effective and achieve desirable educational outcomes in a smart and professional manner.

NLP still has some issues that should be resolved by more studies on the field. As Tosey (2010) points out, being eclectic and lack of theoretical coherence, unclear evidence base, lack of evaluation of its practices, ethical issues, and the need for more empirical research to further understanding of NLP techniques, are some of the issues that need further studies in the field.

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