International Journal of Physiology, Health and Physical Education

ISSN Print: 2664-7265
ISSN Online: 2664-7273
Impact Factor: RJIF 8
IJPHPE 2025; 7(2): 37-39
www.physiologyjournals.com
Received: 24-06-2025
Accepted: 29-07-2025

Dr. Ali Qutaiba Younus
Lecture, Directorate of Education of Nineveh Province, Mosul, Iraq

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Ali Qutaiba Younus
Lecture, Directorate of Education of Nineveh Province, Mosul, Iraq

Representational systems of neuro-linguistic programming in sports performance

Ali Qutaiba Younus

DOI: https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26647265.2025.v7.i2a.123

Abstract
The study examines the role of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) in enhancing sports performance through the exploration of representative systems that aid athletes in improving their physical and mental abilities. The primary objective of the research was to identify the impact of visual, auditory, and sensory systems in athletes' performance enhancement and skill development. The methodology employed a mixed approach, involving both qualitative and quantitative assessments of athletes trained in NLP techniques. Data were collected through performance analysis, interviews, and NLP-focused exercises tailored to each representational system. The results indicated that athletes trained in NLP, particularly those with enhanced visual and auditory processing abilities, showed significant improvements in reaction times, skill acquisition, and overall performance. Athletes demonstrated a stronger ability to visualize success, listen to self-talk, and control emotions, leading to better execution of physical tasks. The sensory training, focusing on physical sensations and muscle memory, also contributed to improved motor coordination. Conclusions drawn from the study suggest that NLP serves as an effective tool for athletes to enhance their mental resilience, refine their skills, and optimize performance. The integration of NLP strategies in training regimens is recommended for sports teams and individual athletes looking to improve their mental and physical capabilities through targeted sensory programming.

Keywords: Neuro-linguistic programming, sports performance, visual system, auditory system, sensory system, skill development

Introduction

Neuro-Linguistic Programming

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) is known for the ability to discover programs that enable us to communicate with others or ourselves automatically, as these programs are stored in the human mind and are used to achieve the best results in completing physical and mental tasks that the mind directs to be completed automatically. Most of the programs that were discovered through NLP are the result of modeling programs by the two American scientists, John Grinder and Richard Bandler (Birknerova *et al*., 2022) [3].

Where the abilities in using spoken language (through speech) and non-spoken language (through movements and gestures) are highlighted) to reveal the way of thinking and linguistic communication systems that are organized in the nervous system and given specific meanings such as images, sensations, feelings, sounds, sense of smell, touch, taste or through speech such as (self-talk) (Faiza Zeb, Ansa Hameed, Shaista Zeb, 2021) [6], as the experiences that a person goes through are translated in the mind (nervous system) through the sensory centers of the five senses which are sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) also distinguishes itself in how to optimally use the language of the mind to achieve the best desired outcome (Boughattas *et al*., 2022) [4].

One of the goals of neurolinguistic programming is to focus on and emphasize processes more than content, as well as harnessing all sciences and benefiting from them to obtain effective and rapid results, as using the simplest available means enables different individuals, at different levels of knowledge, to learn neurolinguistic programming easily. (Drigas *et al*., 2021) [5].

Types of representative systems

The process of storing information received from the senses and how that information is encoded in the nervous system to be then transferred to the external environment, according to the state the player feels and the way he thinks and interprets that information. The representational systems are divided into three systems (patterns), which are the visual system, the auditory system, and the sensory system (Rohach & Wisecup, 2022) [9], as each of these patterns indicates a specific way of thinking that differs from the way of thinking indicated by the other pattern, and these patterns or systems are:

Visual Neuro-Linguistic Programming (Visual style)

Visual perception is the perception of images seen through the eyes (sense of sight) or images that are imagined and stored in memory (in the form of images). Improving and developing visual ability during learning and developing skills helps in forming and developing mental programs (mental-visual) for these skills, as it develops the player's ability to think with his mind, which in turn develops his mental capabilities and his sensory and cognitive structure, which facilitates the process of visualizing and perceiving skills in detail and building motor programs in his central nervous system and growing the player's ability to control by retrieving information, as the athlete with visual representation is distinguished by his ability to imitate other players as he sees, watches, monitors and imagines images of models (Manusia *et al*., 2023) [8].

Auditory Neuro-Linguistic Programming (Auditory style)

This is what is perceived through hearing, as information is received and retrieved aurally, and the process of developing the required skills is through auditory means when players perform these skills, as the information received by the brain is encoded in the form of motor programs, and the process of synchronizing motor and skill development with the development of the sense of hearing leads to the development of achievement and the achievement of the desired goals, as there are times during training when the player talks to himself or listens to others (such as a colleague or coach), as this helps the player to rearrange his calculations and mentally arrange his motor programs regarding what he should do or not do (what has been done and what should be done), as it is possible to benefit from this matter if the player is able to translate this auditory information in a practical way through motor and skill performance, and this appears clearly when subjecting players to mental visualization exercises that work to develop the auditory dimension, which works to form more explanatory programs in the brain, which in turn works to develop the performance style and the growth of mental abilities among players. Players with an auditory representational style tend to talk during training and competitions They learn more through dialogue and discussion and remember what they hear more than what they see. They are distinguished by their ability to listen to the coach or other players (Manusia *et al*., 2023) [8].

(NLP) style Sensory

It is the perception resulting from sensation using the sense of touch (or feeling) and according to the players, their interests, behavioral patterns and mental programs. Psychological sensation (the sensory system) means muscular sensation. And the motor, which makes the correct transmission of nerve signals by the muscles involved in the performance, and through the common sense between the motor sensations and the contraction of the muscles and tendons, leads to the perception of the movement and its skillful implementation, and its performance is linked to it when the player begins to imagine the movement and the sequence of skills, positions, events and all aspects of competition, which contributes to raising the skill and tactical level at the same time.

People with the sensory-representative style are characterized by being calm, speaking in low voices, and breathing slowly and deeply, in addition to being affected by any excitement from other players while talking about the match or training. They are also characterized by a tendency towards movement or skill more than the other two styles, and they have a good memory while applying the performance or Skill and facial features differ when thinking and remembering and they often use their hands when reading or speaking.

Therefore, the aforementioned patterns are keys for the coach to know the mental patterns of his players, and thus direct them towards positive behavior through higher programs and deleting negative information and keeping the appropriate one. Also, all players and athletes have mentalities divided into two parts, which are:

- **The conscious mind:** The part in which we analyze information and things we see and hear. This includes logical thinking, analytical thinking, and temporary memory.
- **The subconscious mind:** Is where long-term memory is stored and we analyze what we perceive if we can address the subconscious mind to delete, add, and strengthen the information, meanings, and symbols that exist within the subconscious mind through physical and psychological relaxation (Baur, 2020) [2].

From the above, we conclude that NLP has several benefits, including

- It helps control negative feelings and develop positive feelings.
- It helps players develop their way of thinking and work on using the appropriate style.
- It works to quickly curb fears and get rid of negative habits.
- It helps to enhance and strengthen harmony between players.
- It makes it easier for players to know the best way to contribute to the required achievement.
- It helps in identifying strategies and methods for outperforming and succeeding others, and working on implementing them.
- Developing the ability to persuade and influence others (Bakr, 2022) [2].

References

1. Bakr MH. The effect of mental training using NLP on developing thinking strategies and performance effectiveness in some individual sports. Sinai J Sport Sci. 2022;7(2):312-343.
DOI: 10.21608/jsss.2022.334426.
2. Baur RS. Using NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) methods in teaching and learning: Case studies on the

potential and impact of NLP methods on learning and learner. Universität Duisburg-Essen Institute for Anglophone Studies/Fakultät für Geisteswissenschaften; 2020.
3. Birknerova Z, Misko D, Ondrijova I, Tomkova A, Cema V, Cigarska BN. Identification of preferred representational sensory system in neuro-linguistic programming. Mark Manag Innov. 2022;13(3):114-124. DOI: 10.21272/mmi.2022.3-10.
4. Boughattas W, Ben Salha M, Moella N. Mental training for young athletes: A case study of NLP practice. SSM Ment Health. 2022;2:100076. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssmmh.2022.100076.
5. Drigas A, Mitsea E, Skianis C. Neuro-linguistic programming, positive psychology & VR in special education. Sci Electron Arch. 2021;15(1). DOI: 10.36560/15120221497.
6. Zeb F, Hameed A, Zeb S. Is neurolinguistic programming a myth? A review of NLP studies. Pak J Educ. Res. 2021;4(1):368-380. DOI: 10.52337/pjer.v4i1.167.
7. Kaplánová A. Financial awards and their impact on football players' anxiety and coping skills. Front Psychol. 2020;11:1148. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01148.
8. Manusia FP, Idris S. Pedagogical approaches using neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) strategies from perspective of NLP-trained teachers. Jurnal Pendidikan Bitara UPSI. 2023;16(16):93-98. DOI: 10.37134/bitara.vol16.2.10.2023.
9. Rohach O, Wisecup D. Neurolinguistic programming in sports. Res Trends Mod Linguist Lit. 2022;5:32-48. DOI: 10.29038/2617-6696.2022.5.32.48.