A SUGGESTED NLP- BASED FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING WRITING TO ADHD PUPILS

Walaa Samir Mohamed El Saedy[1], Dr. El Sayed Dadour[2], Dr. Ashraf Kouta[3]

[1]English Teacher at Ras El-Bar O.L.S., Damietta
[2]Professor of Curriculum & EFL Instruction, Vice president for Community Service& Environmental Development Affairs, Damietta University
[3]Lecturer of English Literature, Faculty of Arts ,Damietta University

WALAA SAMIR MOHAMED EL SAEDY

ABSTRACT

The present descriptive study deals with ADHD learners of English as a foreign language who tend to perform below standards in their class. The study concentrates mainly on ADHD learners' writing skill. It aims to suggest an NLP framework to be practiced in classroom with ADHD pupils to help their teachers, on one hand, use procedural steps in such classes. It also aims to assist, on the other hand, ADHD pupils, themselves, learn in an amusing atmosphere as well as improve their writing skill. The study includes detailed procedural recommendations to be followed for the sake of improving the writing skill of ADHD learners of English as a foreign language at the primary stage.

Key words: ADHD, NLP, Writing, language learning disabilities, students with special needs

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is the launching point in any educational process and the common ground in learning all school subjects not only English language. Besides, writing achievement is considered the dominant criterion to measure pupil's success or failure at school. Due to their nature, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) pupils suffer from a deficiency regarding writing. Thus, NLP is a new tendency in the field of education that aims at helping each pupil reaches his/her utmost potentials.

Based on the results of related literature which reveals that ADHD pupils are facing serious problems concerning achievement, moving smoothly from one grade to another, and language comprehension skills drawback (e.g. McInnes, Humphries, Hogg-Johnson, and Tannock, 2003; Okmi & Ann,2000 ; Tymms & Merrell, 2011). Reasons behind that may include certain characteristics: impulsivity, hyperactivity and inattentiveness. Moreover, it has been mentioned that they have a problem concerning their classroom performance as they do not pay enough attention during classroom work (Appelbaum, 2008).

Besides, Roszak (2009) points out that it is important to put into consideration students' abilities and educational needs; as well as involving the students in the educational process that takes place in class by stimulating their interest in the material presented; and developing their points of strength by giving them a reasonable amount of individual work.

Also, Ma'rouf (2010) recommends reconsidering the most effective methods for teaching EFL courses to ADHD students; and the necessity of stimulating ADHD students' motivation by their teachers during presenting the lesson, controlling the distracting elements, and keeping them focused and attentive during learning.

The present researchers conducted a pilot study in which they made reflective interviews with twenty teachers of primary and preparatory schools. The interviewees were asked to answer the following question: *What are the most important variables/factors that affect the processes of ADHD learning and teaching?* These teachers' answers revealed that: (a) their overloaded schedules that did not allow them to give enough time and effort to deal sufficiently with this category of pupils, (b) they considered ADHD pupils as a classroom burden in themselves, (c) ADHDs' writing performance was lower than their peers, and (d) they did not pay attention during classroom activities. Moreover, these teachers pointed out that there were not any specific teaching strategies assigned to be used with ADHD pupils.

In addition to the results of the pilot study, classroom observation done by one of the present researchers showed that ADHDs' writing performance was lower than their peers; as shown by the results of their achievement tests. Moreover, the researchers kept a record for ADHDs' classroom performance by using running records and journals which assured that these pupils had serious problems concerning paying attention during classroom activities.

Thus, the present researchers attempt to find an answer to the following question: *what are the qualifications of an NLP framework that can help in developing the writing performance of fourth graders ADHD primary school pupils in English language?*

2. Review of Literature

Richard (2000) states that teachers have a moral commitment to make a difference to their pupils' abilities and potentials in general; and to their ADHDs in specific. These pupils suffer from hyperactivity, inattentiveness, short concentration span, short-term memory disorders, and high impulsiveness (Marsh et al., 2005).

Thus, many researchers say that the number of pupils with learning disabilities is about 43% out of all the pupils having special education services; and this rate has risen annually about 14% since 1977 (Al Zayat, 1998). Mohamed (2011) indicates that the percentage of ADHDs among the world is 10%. Both Levine and Reed (1999) agree with Abo Sa'ad (2006) mentioning that the characteristics of ADHD pupils are as follows:

o   Having difficulty following instructions.
o   Showing symptoms of impatience or daydreaming.
o   Misconstruing verbal information which may result in unexpected behaviours.
o   Having problems following and/or participating in conversations in a noisy environment.
o   Having poor eye contact.
o   Having selective listening.
o   Taking a long time to formulate a reply.
o   Agreeing and understanding, but having actually tuned out.
o   Being in constant motion.
o   Seeming not to listen.
o   Having difficulty playing quietly.
o   Often talking excessively.
o   Interrupting or intruding on others.
o   Being easily distracted.
o   Do not finish tasks.

Concerning learning English language; ADHDs have a shortage in their linguistic skills as McInnes, Humphries, Hogg-Johnson, and Tannock (2003) studies proved. This shortage includes problems related to articulation, forming sentences, stuttering, reading problems and the ability to express their ideas in a written form (as they use simple sentences or what is called "safe writing"). Moreover, their cognitive organizational skills are weak as they forget things, cannot find them, and/or cannot liberate from the external factors that affect their attention. When writing a test, they intend to answer as quickly as possible, do not read the instructions properly, get frustrated and often come up with wrong or no answer at all. This is why they need fixed rules, timetable, and breaks and well

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organized tasks that help them to learn (Roszak, 2009). In their study, Tymms and Merrell (2011) believe that these problems occur due to their behavioral problems. While, Webber and Jenny (2011) investigated the educational interventions with these pupils and the results were positive.

Low (2011) and Mozes (2011) mention that ADHD students are more likely to have writing problems in English five times more than students without ADHD, regardless of gender. The studies of El Zayat (1998), Kamel (2003), Low (2011) and Okmi and Ann (2000) reveal that a number of pupils are facing difficulty in writing that appears when using inadequate word spacing, inverting letters order or neglecting them and writing letters in unsuitable font sizes. These studies illustrate that observations indicates these pupils' school papers and notebooks are replete with spelling and dictation mistakes, poor linguistic structures, bad use of punctuation marks, unclear writing, lack of organization and order. Al Batayna, Al Khatatba, Al Sabyal, and Al Rashdan (2005) assure the previously mentioned points when describing the characteristics of pupils with writing difficulties as their copy performance is inaccurate, they need longer time to finish their writing work, they make mistakes when putting words in a sentence in order, they have difficulty in recalling words, and they also make mistakes when putting punctuation marks.

Many national reports in U.S.A. indicate that more attention needs to be given to writing and it teaching in schools to children in general and children with special needs in specific. Also, the reports shows that deficiencies in writing skills are at their greatest when limited English language proficiency is considered (Dunn, 2011).

When reviewing the related literature, it was found that one of the sciences that is used recently in the field of education is Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) which stands for a number of models and techniques to describe the relationship between the mind and the language (linguistic), either verbal or non-verbal, and the way to organize the relationship between them (programming), to affect the learner's thinking (neuro) (Tosey & Mathison & Michelli, 2005).

NLP applications have spread all over several human disciplines such as education, mental and psychological health, commerce, advertising and publicity, marketing, training, personal and family matters, sports and even art. Nevertheless; investigating in NLP applications in the field of education is still an emerging science which means a shortage in the existence of literature related to it. (Carey, Churches, Hutchinson, Jones, Tosey, 2009).

Winstanley (2006,p.9) discusses that NLP is about changing the way people approach life; the way they think and act in all domains. It is the desired approach of teachers who have students with a broad range of needs, learning styles and intelligences.

Carey et. al.(2010, p.6) points out that in the field of education, there is a gap concerning the use of NLP in classroom activities, as it is a new trend and more focus should be headed towards it. There are many researches who recommend the use of NLP in education and the use of influential language patterns, awareness of using all sensory modalities in teaching (e.g. Burton, 2004; Raja and Tien, 2009; Stanton, 1998; Tosey and Mathison, 2003). There is also a growing number of publications on language and learning in general (e.g. Eckstein, 2004; Marcello, 2003; Mathison, 2004; Mathison and Tosey, 2008). Tosey and Mathinson (2003, p.1) think that NLP is eclectic, drawing on models and strategies from a wide range of sources.

Tosey and Mathinson (2003, p.3) agree that NLP holds much potential for teaching and learning. It has many techniques that can be used in classroom situations. Tompkins in Baker (2005) believes that NLP is commonly used to offer solutions to problems encountered in teaching. Also, NLP is said to *encourage English language teachers to come up with ways to deliver the programs and supply even more variety in (their) teaching styles*. So, Winch (2005, pp. 2-4) asserts that NLP is making an impact on English language teaching; since one of the goals of NLP, being used in teaching English, is to enable learners to express their feelings, emotions and experiences freely; rather than just gaining the minimum level of knowledge to pass a test. Furthermore, Pecha

(2012, p.65) mentions that NLP can be incorporated into EFL classes of because the techniques used in this approach make a noticeable change in pupils' learning experience.

3. The Suggested Framework

The present study suggests the following practical steps to be used for applying NLP approach within the field of EFL:

3.1. General Instructions for Teachers
NLP Approach

There are five steps in teaching new strategies to EFL pupils:

1. Introducing pupils to new strategies and show them its importance to them.
2. Modeling the strategies to show them how a learning process takes place in detail.
3. Designing educational tasks to allow pupils try the new strategies by themselves and giving them either oral or written feedback on what they are doing.
4. Identifying the strategies usefulness from both teacher and pupils.
5. Encouraging pupils to use the same strategies and skills in new educational contexts.

3.2. NLP Techniques

NLP Approach includes the following techniques:

3.2.1. Rapport

It is one of the most important ways used to create a solid relationship between teachers and pupils. It could be made by matching learners' gestures, facial expression, body language and leading them to another representational system as well as mirroring pupils' body postures.

Teacher's body language could be best exploited during:

- Giving directions
- Expressing approval
- Expressing refusal
- Leading pupils to get rid of unwanted behaviors or responses

3.2.2. Pacing and leading

This could be done through:

- Introducing new information
- Linking between the new information and the learners' previous knowledge

- Introducing a cognitive challenge for the learners through a written task.
- Giving the learners an immediate feedback on the task.
- Reinforcing learners' correct answer.

3.2.3. Reframing

In the current study, the researchers focused on "Meaning Frame"; in which pupils have to concentrate on adapting their responses with the different questions. It could be achieved through:

- Reframe: Exposing pupils to a previous question or task that they could not answer well.
- Exaggerate: Focusing pupils' attention on the question and the problem in its answer.
- Metaphor: Putting the question in many similar contexts and introducing its answer within the context.
- Therapeutic double bind: Focusing on the correct answer and extracting it from the pupils.

3.2.4. Mirroring

It aims at noticing pupils' mistakes, re-viewing them and deducing the right answer. It could be achieved through the following:

- Extracting pupils mistakes by the end of every session.
- Viewing them on the board accompanied by their corrections.
- Giving the pupils the same questions they have mistaken to answer again.
- Checking pupils' answers and focusing on the correct answer.
- Giving pupils the similar questions at their homework.

3.2.5. Anchoring

It links between pupils' prior knowledge and applying the same reaction in the new educational situations or tasks. It makes use of the three main learning styles VAK as follows:

- During story time/ Conversation role-playing: Teachers vary their voice tone, use colored markers on the board as well as using PowerPoint presentations.

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- During watching educational videos or songs: Teachers assign a purpose for the videos that pupils are to focus on while watching.
- During the written tasks/ Group work: Teachers give pupils a question that requires their personal point of view and set a discussion circle among pupils in groups and whole class discussion either to reinforce that opinion or to modify their point of view about it.

Steps for applying anchoring:

- Clarifying the outcome: Teachers drive pupils' attention to the purpose of the task they are going to do.
- Designing the anchor: This is through the task the teachers assign.
- Check effectiveness: By giving pupils a written or oral task and assess how far the anchor was successful.

3.2.6. Modeling and Swish

It is an explicit representation of the accurate and desired behavior. Learners can model their peers or their teachers by noticing, observing and copying others. For doing this, there are some steps to be followed in a modeling strategy:

- Setting a well-formed outcome related to the skill wanted to be improved.
- Finding good models for the educational situations that get along with the target skill.
- Observing what is being done in the educational situation and trying to do the same.
- Trying to do exactly the same thing in the same way through their pair-work, group work or individually during performing the different tasks.
- Testing learners' responses through oral and written tasks.

Examples of applying modeling in the classroom are like;

- Teachers' pronunciation
- Teachers' clear handwriting
- Pupils' role-playing

3.3. Using VAK Learning Styles within NLP Techniques

This procedure is suggested because each pupil owns a dominant learning style which enables him/her to learn fast. Also, VAK is described in NLP field as the "Representational Systems" that learners use during learning. To integrate VAK resources into the learning environment with VAK learners' teachers should:

- Give the big picture: In the beginning of the session, the teachers give the pupils an overview of what they will learn and the relationship between this new information and their prior knowledge.
- Chunk down the topic: In which the teachers divide a topic into smaller manageable items from five to nine items. Also, the teachers can use the Socratic Method of lecturing by questioning learners to draw as much information, they know, as possible and then fill in the gaps the rest of the information included in the lesson.
- Mind-mapping: The teachers explore, revise and summarize the topic in a visual and creative way.
- Display the key words or structures: By using posters, word cards containing the key words of a certain topic and ask pupils to put these words in sentences in order to reinforce their understanding.
- Include VAK activities: that exploit a varied number of strategies such as brainstorming and role-playing to trigger the memory and help pupils to memorize and recall the spelling and pronunciation of different words.
- Show learners how to debrief activities: This allows them to make connections of what they learned and how it applies to their situation.
- Have the learners verbalize the questions: By rechecking what they are supposed to do in each task.
- Use brain gym or break states /Total Physical Response (TPR) activities: These activities are used in the beginning of a

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lesson or at a transition point within it to improve pupils' physical and mental alertness and co-ordination and help pupils to be more re-organized and focused.

3.3.1. VAK NLP Activities

To meet the individual differences among learners and their varied needs; different activities should be included as follows:

- Using educational videos
- Using practical assignments
- Using music and songs
- Using picture cards

3.4. Teachers' Role in VAK NLP Teaching

1. Manipulating the pupils' three main learning styles and moving smoothly from one style to another.
2. Guiding pupils to their points of strength as well as their points of weakness by the providing them with a continuous feedback.
3. Engaging all learners in varied tasks and activities to meet their educational needs.
4. Monitoring learners' mistakes and correcting them through the oral and feedback.
5. Stimulating pupils' minds through group work and pair-work.
6. Associating (anchoring) between pupils' prior knowledge through role-playing to provide pupils with authentic situations.

3.5. Learners' Role in Learning via VAK NLP Techniques

1. Participating in the varied tasks and activities through working in-pairs and in groups with their peers.
2. Linking between their prior knowledge and new taught information.
3. Shadowing the new learned techniques in other similar situations.

3.6. The Proposed Time Plan for Teaching the Assigned Topics

The following table shows the content that learners have during the experimentation phase, as well as the duration it takes.

Table1. The content, its duration division and how it is handled by teachers

Units	Lessons	Sessions	Timing
Unit 8	4 lessons	3 sessions + 1 session for revision	Twice a week
Unit 9	4 lessons	3 sessions + 1 session for revision	Twice a week
Unit 10	4 lessons	3 sessions + 1 session for revision	Twice a week
Total 3 Units	12 lessons	12 session	3 weeks

3.7. General Aims of the Assigned Units

All the lessons plans, activities and tasks assigned in this paper aimed at developing Primary Four ADHD pupils' writing performance in English through a number of NLP approach techniques.

3.8. Learning Objectives of each Lesson

By the end of the lessons pupils are expected to be able to:

3.8.1. Cognitive Objectives:

- Express regulations.
- Express apologizing.
- Ask about location.
- Revise asking about possession using (Whose ...?).
- Express presence of items.
- Identify speakers in a conversation.
- Write short sentences.
- Read short sentences.
- Recognize words related to nature.
- Practice describing the nature.
- Practice declarative statements with "some and any", positive and negative.
- Identify sound of final (-es) /IZ/sound.
- Read short sentences containing /IZ/sound.
- Write short sentences containing /IZ/sound.
- Associate sound of letters with written form.

3.8.2. Psychomotor Objectives:

- Role-play the dialogue orally, physically and written.

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- Practice eye–hand coordination through answering different tasks.
- Mime natural features through their bodies.
- Practice eye–hand coordination through coloring natural scenes.
- Use body movements to express positive and negative declarative statements.

3.8.3. Affective Objectives:

- Gain self-confidence in speaking and writing in English freely.
- Co-operate with their classmates to finish a task.

3.9. Suggested Teaching Strategies

3.9.1. NLP Techniques

1. Rapport
2. Pacing and leading
3. Reframing
4. Mirroring
5. Anchoring
6. Modeling and swish

3.9.2. VAK NLP Learning Styles Approach

1. TPR method
2. Pair-work
3. Role playing
4. Brain storming

3.10. Teaching Resources Used in the Study

1. Cassette
2. Printed worksheets
3. Picture cards
4. Word cards
5. Educational video about nature words
6. PPT presentation
7. Video with final (-es) sound

3.11. Activities Used by the Teachers to Help Students in Learning

A varied number of activities are to be used; they varied between oral and written activities depending on the content of the lesson.

3.12. Procedures Followed by the Teachers

The following steps are to help teachers teach the lessons of the target units successfully through NLP approach:

1. Exposing pupils to the target language through a number of designed and sequenced tasks.

2. Teaching pupils how to use NLP techniques to answer each task individually, in-pairs or in groups.
3. Letting pupils practice the language by themselves under the guidance and supervision of the teachers who monitor and record their mistakes.
4. Providing pupils with continuous feedback on the different tasks to avoid making the same mistakes again.
5. Assessing pupils' perception of the new information through a written assessment task after each session.

3.13. Suggested Evaluation Techniques

3.13.1. Pre-treatment (Diagnostic): It is to be used to assess learners' level before the treatment.

3.13.2. Pre- test (Achievement): It is proposed in order to see the amount of knowledge learners have about the assigned units before the treatment.

3.13.3. Formative Evaluation: To assess learners' progress during applying the target approach, through their answers on the lesson written tasks.

3.13.4. Summative Evaluation: The finals.

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